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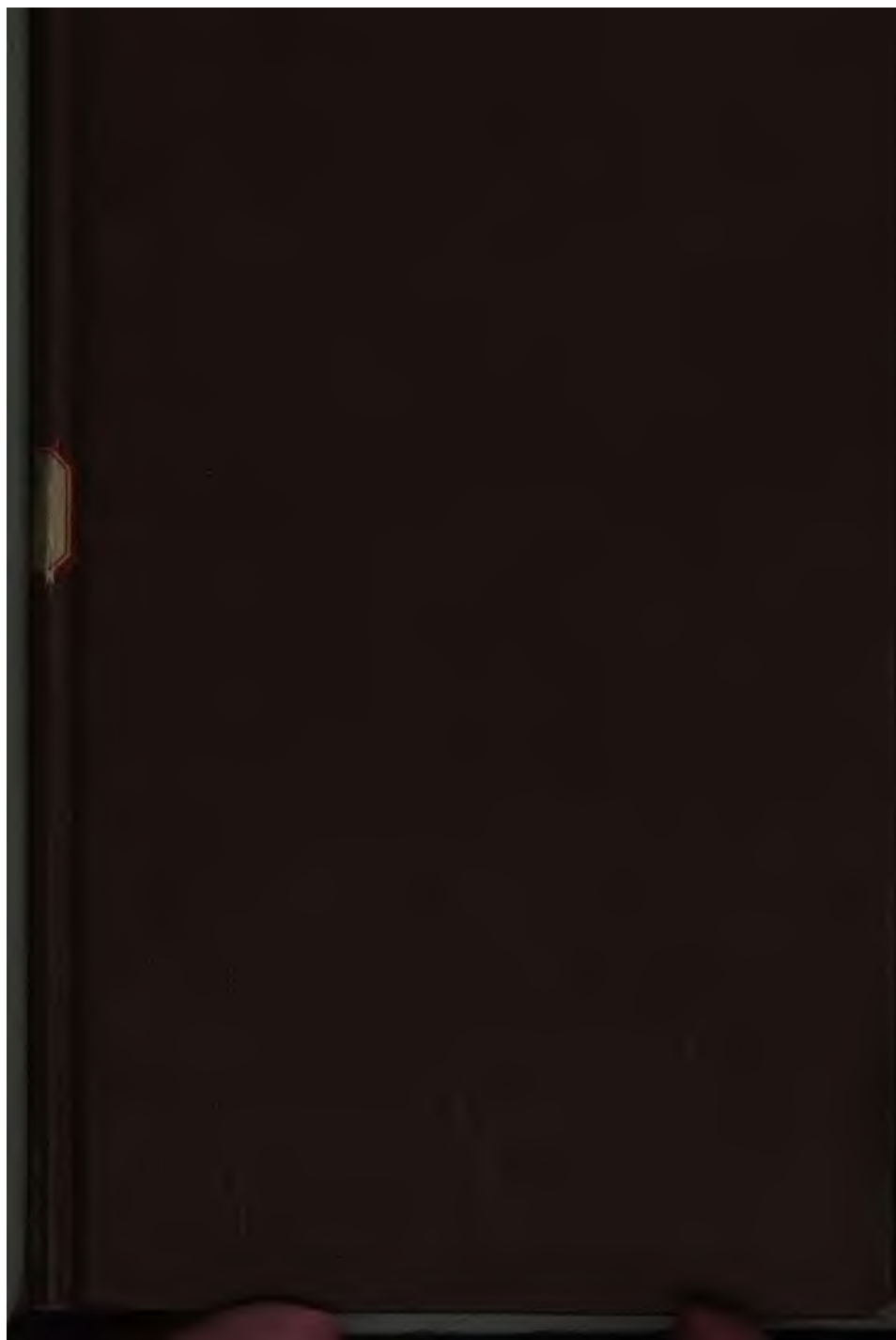
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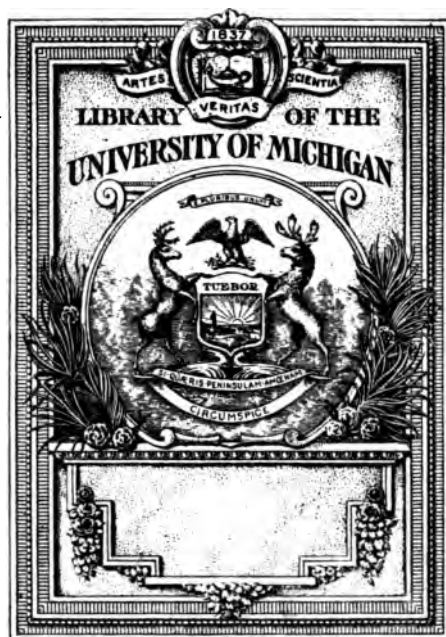
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J. Lottwell.

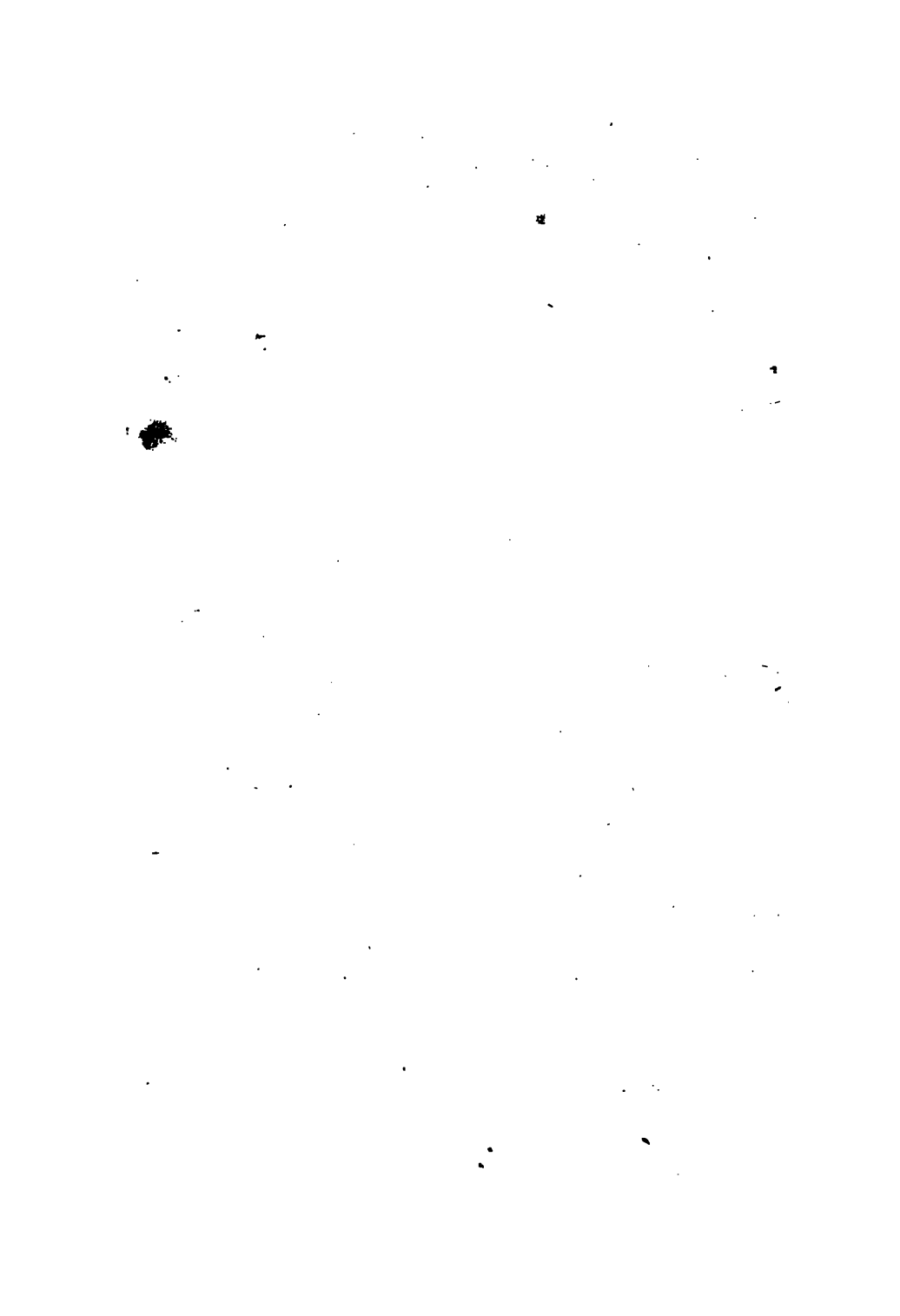
from

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J. T. B.

Bradford







BOSTON

PRIZE POEMS,

AND

OTHER SPECIMENS

OF

DRAMATIC POETRY.

BOSTON:
PUBLISHED BY JOSEPH T. BUCKINGHAM,
At the Office of the New England Gallery.
1824.

CAMBRIDGE :
Printed by Hilliard & Metcalf.

INTRODUCTORY.

IN September, 1823, the manager of the Boston Theatre, by advertisement in the newspapers, offered a prize of the value of fifty dollars, for the best Ode, or other poetical Address, that should be presented previous to the first of December then following, suitable to be recited at the exhibition of a pageant in honour of Shakspeare. Upwards of thirty pieces were offered. The manager appointed ten gentlemen of literary reputation, in Boston and Cambridge, to award the prize. The following is the report of the committee.

"The gentlemen who were requested by the manager of the Boston Theatre to examine the merits of the several poems written on occasion of the approaching jubilee in honour of Shakspeare, and to decide which is entitled to the medal proposed, are of opinion that this honour should be awarded to Mr. Charles Sprague, as the author of the poem, marked No. 22.

The gentlemen however owe it to the author of a poem entitled, "Shakspeare's Triumph," to say, that its intrinsic merit is so great, and it is so well adapted to recitation, that they consider it entitled to high commendation, and they cannot but express their wish that the author would allow it to be recited on the stage.

W. DUTTON,
A. RITCHIE,
in behalf of the Committee.

Among the unsuccessful compositions, were several of much merit; and to present these to the publick, together with that which obtained the prize, in a form convenient for preservation, was the primary object of the present publication. The piece alluded to by the Committee, entitled "Shakspeare's Triumph," is that which immediately follows the Prize Ode. In selecting from the rejected pieces for this publication, the publisher was not governed altogether

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by his own opinion. Two or three are inserted which his own taste and judgment would have induced him to reject. The piece numbered 13 is inserted at the special request of the writer.

It afterwards occurred to the publisher, that it might gratify many readers to find in the same volume, several other productions of a similar nature, which have been elicited by similar occasions. To the original pieces are therefore added the Prize Prologue of the late Robert Treat Paine, two Prize Prologues by Charles Sprague, and one by Thomas Wells,—all of Boston.

That the reader may have an opportunity, if he wishes, to compare not only the respective merits of these productions with each other, but also to view them side by side with the productions of English poets in the same species of composition, the volume is enriched with Pope's Prologue to Cato, Johnson's celebrated Prologue at the opening of Drury-Lane theatre, Garrick's Ode for the Shakspeare Jubilee, Rogers's Address for Mrs. Siddons, Sheridan's Monody on Garrick, Byron's Prize Prologue, and Kemble's Address on leaving the stage.

PRIZE ODE

BY CHARLES SPRAGUE.

PRIZE ODE.

God of the glorious Lyre !
Whose notes of old on lofty Pindus rang,
While Jove's exulting quire
Caught the glad echoes and responsive sang—
Come ! bless the service and the shrine,
We consecrate to thee and thine.

Fierce from the frozen north,
When havock led his legions forth,
O'er Learning's sunny groves the dark destroyers spread :
In dust the sacred statue slept,
Fair Science round her altars wept,
And Wisdom cowed his head.

At length, Olympian Lord of morn,
The raven veil of night was torn,
When, through golden clouds descending,
Thou didst hold thy radiant flight
O'er nature's lovely pageant bending,
Till Avon rolled, all-sparkling, to thy sight !

There, on its bank, beneath the Mulberry's shade,
 Wrapped in young dreams, a wild-eyed Minstrel strayed.
 Lighting there and lingering long,
 Thou didst teach the Bard his song ;
 Thy fingers strung his sleeping shell,
 And round his brows a garland curled ;
 On his lips thy spirit fell,
 And bade him wake and warm the world !

Then Shakspeare rose !
 Across the trembling strings
 His daring hand he flings,
 And lo ! a new creation glows !
 There, clustering round, submissive to his will,
 Fate's vassal train his high commands fulfil.

Madness, with his frightful scream,
 Vengeance, leaning on his lance,
 Avarice, with his blade and beam,
 Hatred, blasting with a glance,
 Remorse, that weeps, and Rage, that roars,
 And Jealousy, that dotes but dooms, and murders yet
 adores.

Mirth, his face with sunbeams lit,
 Waking Laughter's merry swell,
 Arm in arm with fresh-eyed Wit,
 That waves his tingling lash, while Folly shakes his
 bell.
 From the feudal tower pale Terror rushing,

Where the prophet bird's wail
 Dies along the dull gale,
 And the sleeping monarch's blood is gushing !

Despair, that haunts the gurgling stream,
 Kissed by the virgin moon's cold beam,
 Where some lost maid wild chaplets wreathes,
 And, swan-like, there her own dirge breathes,
 Then, broken-hearted, sinks to rest,
 Beneath the bubbling wave, that shrouds her maniac
 breast.

Young Love, with eye of tender gloom,
 Now drooping o'er the hallowed tomb,
 Where his plighted victims lie,
 Where they met, but met to die :—
 And now, when crimson buds are sleeping,
 Through the dewy arbour peeping,
 Where beauty's child, the frowning world forgot,
 To youth's devoted tale is listening,
 Rapture on her dark lash glistening,
 While fairies leave their cowslip cells and guard the
 happy spot.

Thus rise the phantom throng,
 Obedient to their Master's song,
 And lead in willing chain the wondering soul along.
 For other worlds war's Great One sighed in vain,—
 O'er other worlds see Shakspeare rove and reign !

The rapt Magician of his own wild lay,
 Earth and her tribes his mystick wand obey.
 Old ocean trembles, thunder cracks the skies,
 Air teems with shapes, and tell-tale spectres rise :
 Night's paltering hags their fearful orgies keep,
 And faithless guilt unseals the lip of sleep :
 Time yields his trophies up, and death restores,
 The mouldered victims of his voiceless shores ;
 The fireside legend, and the faded page,
 The crime that cursed, the deed that blessed an age,
 All, all come forth—the good to charm and cheer,
 To scourge bold Vice, and start the generous tear ;
 With pictured Folly gazing fools to shame,
 And guide young Glory's foot along the path of fame.

Mark the sceptred traitor slumbering !
 There flit the slaves of conscience round,
 With boding tongue foul murders numbering ;
 Sleep's leaden portals catch the sound.
 In his dream of blood for mercy quaking,
 At his own dull scream behold him waking !
 Soon that dream to fate shall turn,
 For him the *living* furies burn ;
 For him the vulture sits on yonder misty peak,
 And chides the lagging night, and whets her hungry
 beak.
 Hark ! the trumpet's warning breath
 Echoes round the vale of death,
 Where, through the maddening ranks, the god of slaughter
 rides,
 And o'er their spouting trunks his reeking axle guides !

Unhorsed, unhelmed, disdaining shield,
 The panting tyrant scours the field.
 Vengeance! he meets thy dooming blade!
 The scourge of earth, the scorn of heaven,
 He falls! unwept and unforgiven,
 And all his guilty glories fade.
 Like a crushed reptile in the dust he lies,
 And Hate's last lightning quivers from his eyes!

Behold yon crownless king—
 Yon white-locked, weeping sire :—
 Where heaven's unpillared chambers ring,
 And burst their streams of flood and fire!
 He gave them all—the daughters of his love ;—
 That recreant pair!—they drive him forth to rove ;
 In such a night of wo,
 The cubless regent of the wood
 Forgets to bathe her fangs in blood,
 And caverns with her foe!
 Yet one was ever kind,—
 Why lingers she behind?
 O pity!—view him by her dead form kneeling,
 Even in wild frenzy holy nature feeling.
 His aching eyeballs strain
 To see those curtained orbs unfold,
 That beauteous bosom heave again,—
 But all is dark and cold.
 In agony the father shakes ;
 Grief's choking note
 Swells in his throat,
 Each withered heart-string tugs and breaks!

Round her pale neck his dying arms he wreathes,
And on her marble lips his last, his death-kiss breathes.

Down ! trembling wing—shall insect weakness keep
The sun-defying eagle's sweep ?
A mortal strike celestial strings,
And feebly echo what a seraph sings ?
Who now shall grace the glowing throne,
Where, all unrivalled, all alone,
Bold Shakspeare sat, and looked creation through,
The Minstrel Monarch of the worlds he drew ?

That throne is cold—that lyre in death unstrung,
On whose proud note delighted Wonder hung.
Yet old Oblivion, as in wrath he sweeps,
One spot shall spare—the grave where Shakspeare
sleeps.

Rulers and ruled in common gloom may lie,
But Nature's laureate bards shall never die.
Art's chiselled boast, and Glory's trophied shore,
Must live in numbers, or can live no more.
While sculptured Jove some nameless waste may claim,
Still rolls th' Olympic car in Pindar's fame :
Troy's doubtful walls, in ashes passed away,
Yet frown on Greece in Homer's deathless lay :
Rome, slowly sinking in her crumbling fanes,
Stands all-immortal in her Maro's strains :—
So, too, yon giant empress of the isles,
On whose broad sway the sun forever smiles,
To Time's unsparing rage one day must bend,
And all her triumphs in her Shakspeare end !

**O Thou ! to whose creative power
 We dedicate the festal hour,
 While Grace and Goodness round the altar stand,
 Learning's anointed train, and Beauty's rose-lipped
 band—**

**Realms yet unborn, in accents now unknown,
 Thy song shall learn, and bless it for their own.
 Deep in the West, as Independence roves,
 His banners planting round the land he loves,
 Where nature sleeps in Eden's infant grace,
 In time's full hour shall spring a glorious race :—
 Thy name, thy verse, thy language shall they bear,
 And deck for thee the vaulted temple there.**

**Our Roman-hearted fathers broke
 Thy parent empire's galling yoke,
 But thou, harmonious monarch of the mind,
 Around their sons a gentler chain shalt bind ;—
 Once more, in thee, shall Albion's sceptre wave,
 And what her mighty Lion lost, her mightier Swan shall
 save !**



METRICAL PIECES.

UNSUCCESSFUL.

I.

My spirit stood upon enchanted ground,
Which bore the spell of Fancy's rich domain ;
I saw the splendors of her golden reign,
And breathed the glories that she flung around.
The earth was gay with fairy flowers,
That varied with the changing hours,
And mocked, with shifting hues, th' uncertain sight ;
Light music danced upon the air,
From unseen harps, that warbled there ;
And every sense drank deep of full delight.

The ethereal scene was peopled as I gazed ;
The assembled myriads of the human race,
In crowds, that none could number, thronged the place ;
And, on a gorgeous throne, on high upraised,
Sat the beauteous virgin Queen,
Mistress of the altered scene.
She waved her hand—the crowd was still ;—
Attentive to declare her will,
Four heralds waited in emblazoned pride ;
Each held a coronet of flowers
Gathered from Fame's immortal bowers,
And each a trumpet to his lips applied.

“Sound,” cried the Goddess; “lift your wreaths on high;
 Bid all who thirst for deathless fame draw nigh,
 And join the contest for the glorious prize,
 That waits, the worthiest brows to grace;
 The plaudits of the human race
 Shall mark their honoured names, and bear them to the
 skies.”

The first proclaimed—“ For him whose fancy dares,
 With boldest flight to traverse worlds unknown,
 And rival Nature’s wonders, with her own—
 This mystick wreath our Goddess Queen prepares.”
 He spake—and every age and clime
 Sent claimants for the palm sublime.
 Richly gifted spirits came,
 With hearts of fire and lips of flame,
 And swept the appointed course with pinion swift and
 bold.
 With ardour, like their own, inspired,
 The gazing multitude admired,
 And loud, from rank to rank, applauding murmurs rolled.

But none had won the high award.
 Then rose in might old Avon’s bard.
 Glancing his heaven-ward eye, he waved his hand,
 And struck the scene with Prospero’s powerful wand
 Lo, to the magic touch, all Nature yield !
 The secret forms that unknown worlds concealed,
 The fairy ring, the witch’s cave,
 The sacred mysteries of the grave,

At his command came visibly to light ;
 The spirits in air and sea that dwell,
 Or lie within the cowslip's bell,
 In clear and bodily shape, salute the astonished sight.
 Then burst the applauding shout from all around ;
 The hills and heavens resound
 With Shakspeare's name,
 And on his brow descends the wreath of living flame.

Another trump—" Who holds the mightiest sway
 O'er stormy passion, by his powerful word,
 Pale Horror's master and Ambition's lord ;—
 Whom all the unruly hosts of Wrath obey,
 And, at his bidding, lay their terrors down,—
 Him next we crown."
 Again the great of every age,
 Exert their strong poetick rage ;
 The fire of Greece, the force of Rome,
 Whatever charmed in ancient days,
 Whatever modern art displays,
 Arrayed for victory, to the contest come.
 In vain they strive,—in vain their passions swell ;
 For, who, where all are great, shall all excel ?

But see, where, grouped by Shakspeare's hand,
 Those pale, disordered figures stand !
 The passionate king, by stormy frenzy driven ;
 The Moor's frank heart, by jealous madness riven ;
 The ambitious Queen, that heaven and hell defied ;
 The unearthly prophets, that provoked her pride ;—

He bade arise their fearful forms,
He clothed their destiny in storms,
 And taught them how to shake the maddening breast.
 The sterner passions of the soul,
 Subjected to his strong control,
 Writhed in his grasp, convulsive and opprest.
 Enough ! The agitated crowd,
 In acclamations, long and loud,
 Their choice proclaim ;
 And Shakspeare wears the second wreath of fame.

The trumpet calls—" He that with gentlest hand
 Unlocks the source of tenderness and tears,
 And sympathy, that man to man endears ;
 He next in order takes his honoured stand."—
 Uprose the favoured sons of song,
 From every clime, of every age.
 They poured a flood of rapturous sound along,
 To touch the feeling heart and sympathy engage.
 Sorrow, and Hope deferred,
 And ill-requited Love,
 Borne on the air, in moving strains were heard,
 Like seraph voices from the realms above.

But when the Bard of Avon touched the string,
 And bade the love-lorn, crazed Ophelia sing,
 Rehearsed the sad, sweet tale of Juliet's charms,
 And placed Cordelia in the old king's arms,—
 Every heart dissolved in grief,
 Tears burst from every eye ;

And nothing, save one deep and general sigh,
 Broke the long pause in which they sought relief.
 Sublime that stillness of the countless crowd !
 When myriads spake not, moved not, nor aloud
 Vented their feeling ; but, in sobs suppressed,
 Calmed down the heaving tumult of the breast.
 Eloquent tribute ! which, without a word,
 To him who wore two crowns, assigned the third.

Once more the trumpet—" Where is he that rules
 The springs of wit ; at whose command appears
 The unconscious laughter, streaming into tears ;
 Master alike of wise men and of fools ?"
 From every corner of the earth,
 Then came the company of mirth.
 Sparkling sunshine decked their path ;—
 Pointed shafts of sportive wrath,
 Lightning keen that glanced and died,
 Spread frolick and delight on every side.

But louder still the joyous tumult grew,
 When Shakspeare's hand unrolled
 Treasures of wit, unequalled and untold,
 And spread them, playful, in the world's broad view ;
 And when he led the merry Falstaff out,
 The welcome of a quick, spontaneous shout,
 Which, with electric wonder, burst
 From all above, around, below,
 Hailed him, the gifted man, in every trial first ;
 And the Queen twined the chaplet round his brow.

“Wonderful man !” she cried ; “in thee complete
The wonders of all others meet ;
To *them* ’tis given,
In one achievement, only, to be great ;
But *thou* hast drawn the power from heaven,
The gifts of each and all to emulate.
Theirs are the single hues of radiance bright
Divided from the sun’s meridian rays ;
Thine is the brilliance of intenser light,
That dazzles in his fierce collected blaze.
In each high path of Genius unsurpassed ;
In all united—single, first, and last.”

II.

I. 1.

Daughter of Cœlus !* as of old
 The lute of Memnon, to the morning strung,
 Sweetly Hyperion's welcome sung,
 His sapphire crown and glittering car of gold,—
 The breathing shell salutes thine ear ;
 O, from thy arching house appear !
 Thou, that in ancient day didst give to earth
 Beauty in the Muse's birth,
 For whose embrace the doting god, in love,
 Forsook his starry courts above,
 And sought thy silvan bower, and wooed
 A love so pure as thine in some more gentle mood.

I. 2.

And thou, the master of each song,†
 Whose voice was musick and the breath of love,
 Solemn Enchanter ! that above
 On Fancy's seraph pinion sailed along,
 And rode the stormy cloud on high,
 Whilst rapture lit thy searching eye ;
 Sweetly to thee shall joy's ecstatic throng
 Wake the wildly-pleasing song,
 And touch the golden lute, whilst round
 The lyre of more majestic sound

* Mnemosyne.

† Shakspeare.

Breathes loud and deep with solemn swell,
Till listening Echo speaks from her enchanted cell.

I. 3.

Silver Avon ! as the dirge
Of evening, by thy twilight verge,
 Wandering winds sung faint and far,
 And Titan plunged his burning car
Deep in the western surge,
There he, to Nature's worship kneeling,
In devotion's purest feeling,
Touched the love-enticing viol,
 Whilst the listening goddess smiled,
And, to more ambitious trial,
 Every tone his hand beguiled !
And we can trace that Genius in its flight,
 Like the fierce eagle, with an eye of fire
And untamed pinion, to a dizzy height
 And brightness more intense, till we admire
The dauntless spirit and the undazzled eye,
That scanned the azure deep of the abyss on high.

II. 1.

Mighty Magician ! round thy throne,
 When thou didst wave thy golden wand, how came
 The Passions, soothed to gentler frame !
Hope, with her amber hair and azure zone,
Suspicious Fear, and haggard Care,
Revenge, and silent, sad Despair !—
Young Love came smiling through his tears, and Joy

Led to thee the smiling boy,
 Though lynx-eyed Jealousy stood near
 And listened with a cunning ear;
 Whilst Melancholy, from the shade
 Of russet woodlands came, sad, broken-hearted maid !

II. 2.

As fervently Pygmalion prest
 Erst the cold marble, till with life it glowed,
 So, from thy birth, the passion flowed,
 Tempered to chaste sensation, in thy breast,
 For the coy nymph of modest eye,
 Nature's sweet-child, Simplicity,
 Till the pure essence of her birth became
 Thine, and her's the holy flame,
 That burned within thy bosom's sacred shrine :—
 And not with love more pure than thine
 The daughters fair of Pyrrha's race
 Gave to Deucalion's sons their youth and virgin grace.

II. 3.

When thy soul, to rapture wrought,
 Inspiration's brightness caught,
 Freer than the morning wind,
 It left this dwindling world behind,
 And purer regions sought !
 And still thy hand, ambitious ever,
 Reached to more sublime endeavour !—
 Child of song ! thou didst inherit
 Amphion's fire and untamed pride,

And the Theban's* eagle spirit
 Soaring o'er Ismenus' tide.
 Yet to more soft enchantment did thy hand
 Sweep the light chords of Sappho's thrilling lute,
 As by Ilissus' stream in Grecian land
 Her fingers taught the chastened chord to suit
 A broken spirit,—and the quivering wire
 Breathed to the echoing air with Love's decaying fire.

III. 1.

Softly, as when the zephyr's wing
 Fans the soft chord at evening's holy tide,
 Or, where the babbling waters glide,
 The breathing lute, with melancholy string,
 Sounds sadly to the morning gale
 When night withdraws her sable veil,
 Could the enchanter Love's divine control
 Soothe to numbers sweet thy soul,
 And give to feeling a more hallowed tone ;—
 And so, when from her solemn throne
 Grief touched with chastening hand thy heart,
 It beat to sadder measures with diviner art.

III. 2.

Lo ! slowly moves the pageant train !
 And, as from angel harps soft musick breaks,
 When the unfettered spirit takes
 Its farewell parting from the world and pain,
 So, on the ravished ear grows mute

* Pindar.

The musick of the love-strung lute !
 Again the seraph sings from yon light cloud ;—
 Mimick Echo laughs aloud,
 Where Comus and his Bacchanalian band
 Of Satyrs, moving hand in hand,
 And sylvan nymphs, with roses crowned,
 The car of Thalia draw with lutes of silver sound.

III. 3.

Not unto the Paphian Queen,
 Moving in her silver sheen,
 Be the song, for now is hung
 O'er his tomb the lyre unstrung,
 And wreathed with cypress sad !
 See, see its master-spirit languish !
 Tuned each quivering chord to anguish,
 Till, with madness in its numbers,
 Bursts the string, HE swept before !
 Never, woken from its slumbers,
 Never, hand may sweep it more !
 The earth has taken back the dust it gave,
 And sadly now, with melancholy eye,
 Afflicted Memory lingers round his grave,
 And evening winds the dirge of Genius sigh,
 Whilst there the pilgrim's solemn footsteps turn,
 And Beauty weeps at night o'er Love's forsaken urn.

III.

Cantando tu illum?

Virg. Eccl. III.

When Truth began to sweep the pall
 Of Ignorance from men benighted,
 When Bigotry foresaw her fall,
 And dawning Reason beamed on all,
 When Fancy, too, her torch had lighted,
 And now the world, with rapturous joy, was hailing
 Its freedom from the night that long had bound it,
 A star arose, with lustre never failing,
 To throw its steady beam in brightness round it :
 The morning star,
 Which ushered in the day,
 Which boldly swept away
 The mists of darkness flying far !
 The morning star, which ushers in the day,
 When eve approaches, with its silver ray,
 Will still adorn the beauteous heaven,
 The god of morn—the god of even.
 Oh ! glorious star, such is thy happy lot,
 First to be worshipped and adored, and last forgot !

All was in grovelling ignorance obscured—
 Imagination dared not raise her pinion—
 Men were in lowly thoughts too much immured
 To soar aloft to Fancy's bright dominion,

And Poesy languished, Wit was in its grave,
 The Stage despised, the Drama in disgrace,—
 When Shakspeare, Shakspeare rose, and gave
 To them their lofty place,
 And won himself the throne,
 Where each succeeding race
 Shall bow, and bend the knee, to him, and him alone !

Where, where are they, who cannot feel
 His power, to them appealing,
 His magick o'er them stealing,
 Whose breasts are not of steel ?
 Who shall not own his potent sway ?
 Who shall refuse his impulse to obey ?
 The glittering tear is swelling
 In Beauty's moistened eye,
 While she is fondly dwelling
 On Juliet's sweetness, hopes, her love and agony.
 With deep-felt sighs each bosom heaves,
 Whene'er Ophelia, in her sadness, grieves,
 And pours, with softest mildness,
 Her strains of sorrowing wildness
 So piteously forth, rude souls would melt,
 And sympathetic throbs, in flinty hearts, be felt.

And then, with cruel horrors rife,
 Behold the Thane of Cawdor and his wife—
 She boldly urges on his hellish deeds—
 He falters, she upbraids—she chides and he proceeds,

And neither spares the murdering knife :—
 With hands deep died in blood that murky night,
 " A sorry sight,"
 She " shames to wear a heart so white !"

See, too, the noble, hasty Moor,
 By desperation wrought
 To slay his wife, in innocence secure,
 His agonies of thought,
 The workings of a soul with jealous madness fraught—
 The fury of his feeling's fiery flood,
 " Blood, blood, Iago, blood !"
 And then his wild remorse,
 When he beholds her corse,
 " Cold, cold"—
 His gushing, burning tears, which will not be controlled.

And, guided by his potent hand,
 His magic wand
 Has caused new beings, and new worlds to leap
 Into existence.
 Has " called up spirits from the vasty deep ;"
 Demons of darkness, they,
 Unused to be commanded, all obey,
 And yield to his o'erpowering sway,
 Without resistance !

But how shall we attempt to speak the praise
 Of all his tuneful, ever-varied lays ?

The world, in wonder, hailed his birth—
 And each, in admiration, hears
 Heaven's sweetest music in their ears,
 From one among the sons of earth.
 All nature round him freshly blooms,
 Flowers in his path are springing,
 The gentlest gales bring their perfumes,
 Their fragrance round him flinging—
 He riots in all sounds and sights,
 Of sweetness, beauty, and of love ;
 And, careless, revels in delights,
 Which seem as from above !

No bonds of leaden dulness could constrain
 Him in their chain :—
 His mighty soul
 Brooked not control,—
 On wings of genius rising,
 And time and space despising,
 He soared aloft in generous disdain.
 All worship at the lofty throne
 Of genius, and of taste, which he alone
 May call his own.
 There sits he, with a laurel chaplet bound,
 Which Nature wove him—by the Muses crowned !

God of the Drama ! may our homage be,
 This eve, an offering not unworthy thee !
 May this not be the last !

Oh ! may thy shade preside
On many a night beside,—
Thy temple be our pride,
And on thine altar grateful incense cast !

IV.

Hark ! from yon temple's thousand domes,
 With distant glory dimly shining,
 What strain of solemn musick comes,
 Such softness, majesty combining.
 Near, and more near in triumph swelling,
 It rolls along this vaulted dwelling,
 Sweet, as when morning stars creation's birth were
 telling.

What means this gush of harmony ? what rays
 Of sudden splendour flash upon the gaze ?
 Behold, emerging from the gloom of years,
 Enrobed in light, a glorious form appears ;
 The glittering diadem, the laurel wreath,
 Perennial blooming on the brow beneath,
 The look, where thoughts unutterable dwell,
 Like spirits prisoned in their midnight cell,
 Till, summoned by the dread magician's spell,
 All, in unerring characters, proclaim,
 Shakspeare ! the idol of immortal fame ;
 Enchanted nature thrilling at the sound,
 Bids Shakspeare's name through the wide world
 resound.

In raiments, dark with sable folds,
 A goddess form attends his side,

One hand a blood-stained dagger holds,
 And one, her raven locks divide.
 'Tis she, who claims the stern devotion
 Of every deep, sublime emotion,
 And stems the waves of Passion's stormy ocean.
 She stands, in all the pomp of beauty, there,
 Queen of the realms of darkness and despair.
 While, ever near, a nymph, with frolic glee,
 With fairy steps and smiles, bounds merrily,
 Scattering wild blossoms as she flies along,
 Inspiring mirth and love and life and song ;
 Vassals to him, they wait the fearful hour,
 That shows the mysteries of his wizard power.
 They come, their mighty master near,
 The beings of his own creation.

What art thou ? thing of hate and fear ;
 Thou monster of unknown formation ?
 I know thee by the murderous eye,
 The smile of serpent treachery,
 The ghosts that throng around thy gorgeous canopy,
 The gory bier, the violated throne,
 The shriek of innocence, the dying groan ;
 Relentless Gloucester ! these thy empire own !

But who is he, whose kingly brow
 With such majestick splendour 's beaming ?
 Who stands amidst the phantom show,
 Where strange, unearthly fires are gleaming ;

Why do those spectral forms glide by?
 Why turns on him each marble eye?
 That royal hand is stained with blood;
 Those purple robes conceal a scorpion's brood;
 Pale spectres rising from the unseen grave,
 Their gory locks forever near him wave;
 Around his couch their horrid vigils keep,
 And shriek aloud—"Macbeth hath murdered sleep."

But see, another darker vision
 This shadowy pomp of guilt succeeds;
 'Tis not the wreck of proud ambition;
 More deadly fires that bosom feeds,
 Hell on that sable brow is gleaming,
 Wild, supernatural terrors streaming
 From eyes with love's mild radiance lately beaming.
 How fair, how innocent, how angel-like,
 The unconscious victim, jealous wrath would strike!
 No more—humanity shrinks back oppressed;
 Terrible bard! in darkness veil the rest!

As sweet, as terrible display
 The milder splendours of thy sway;
 The forms of living loveliness,
 Or spirits in aerial dress,
 Sparkling with bright, heart-springing glee,
 Mirth and fantastick revelry;
 These with ten thousand splendours shine,
 While heavenly musick warbles from each line.

But mortal step as well might wind
Round every star in heaven's blue arch ;
As seek, to earthly paths confined,
To trace thy spirit's wondrous march.
As well might painter's art condense
Creation's broad magnificence
In one small space, as my weak strain,
Tell all the glories of thy reign.
Thy spirit, in these echoing walls,
Kindles young Genius' dawning rays,
That, with exulting pride, recalls
The memories of departed days.
But walls and temples seek in vain
That mighty spirit to restrain ;
O'er the far kingdoms of the world,
Its wings of glory are unfurled,
Scorning each bound,—its only home,
Eternal nature's lofty dome.

V.

Honour to those, whose mighty spirits soar
On wings, o'er regions feebly trod before,
Whose genius lights and elevates their kind,
Unfolds to man the hidden powers of mind,
Gives him his highest hope and boldest claim,
The heritage—a deathless fate and fame.

From falling column, and from mouldering urn,
The fate of conquerors and of kings we learn ;
The Bard is ransomed from the hand of Time,
He lives immortal in his glowing rhyme.
From heaven descended, plays a sacred fire,
With spark electric, round the minstrel's lyre ;
Guard we with vestal care the flame divine,
And pay our homage at a Shakspeare's shrine.

A form majestick rises on my sight !
On his brow gleams a diadem of light ;
He waves a potent wand—at his command,
The long since dead in life before me stand :
Their “pomp and circumstance” they still retain,
And act the busy drama o'er again.
The page of history, once darkly scrolled
With things mysterious, now is all unrolled.
The plots of statesmen and the plans of kings,
The public action and its private springs,

The secret workings and the guilty dreams
 Of human passions in their dark extremes ;
 The human heart lies bare to human eye,
 And vice and folly from their coverts fly ;
 The fears of guilt o'er reason's powers prevail,
 And coward conscience tells a gloomy tale.
 "Macbeth hath murdered sleep"—a phantom throng
 In sad procession slowly wind along ;
 Ambition's victims, pale, and stained with gore,
 "One bears a glass in which are many more ;"
 With threatening gestures they his soul affright,
 Then mock the sense, and vanish into night.

Where yonder sentries o'er their watch-towers lean,
 The ghost of Hamlet stalks with pallid mien.
 The guilty secrets of the grave unseals,
 To living ears a tale of death reveals,
 Disturbs the revels of a new made bride,
 And wakes the conscience of a fratricide.

The scene is changed ; on some enchanted ground,
 Lo ! sprightly elves and fairies flit around ;
 With moon-beams girt, the light, fantastic crew,
 Their nightly revels and their sports renew.
 The spell of fancy works, and sylph and gnome,
 For earthly hests leave their etherial home.
 I hear the strains of an unearthly choir,—
 A captive spirit mourns—'tis Ariel's lyra ;
 A mortal's bidding he obeys with pain,
 And sighs to join his native realms again.

Hark to the sounds of mirth ! a joyous band,
 Of youth and beauty, wreathing hand in hand ;
 With curious eye we watch the gallant show,—
 A lover plights his faith—'tis Romeo.
 Now hark, again ! what means that passing bell ?
 To youthful hearts it strikes a chilling knell ;
 The flowers of hope may wither ; beauty lies,
 Entombed in mouldering charnels ; Juliet dies ;
 And the fond lover 's fated to attest
 Despair's fell triumph in the human breast.

The scene moves on ; with tales of battles done,
 The gentle Desdemona's love is won.
 Still be the hero's sword with laurels crowned,
 Still be the laurel wreath with myrtles bound.
 The conquering sword, his country's rights secure,
 Now reaps a myrtle harvest for the Moor.
 But soon it withers ; and his noble mind,
 The prey of "green-eyed jealousy" we find ;
 And now the muse in saddest hue appears,
 And her dark robe is moistened with our tears.

Still to my sight a host of beings grow ;
 Some wear the garb of joy and some of woe.
 The humorous jester, the revengeful Jew,
 In living colours rise upon my view.
 Here Falstaff hacks his blade,—with story fond ;
 There Shylock whets his knife, and claims his bond.
 With "quips and quirks" see laughing Benedict,
 A sighing swain by Cupid's arrows pricked :

"Give me another horse!"—'tis Richard calls,
The dark relentless tyrant, dying, falls.

No laws of space our roving feet confine :
We stand in Rome, and from the Palatine
With deepening interest watch the busy scene :
What crowd invests the forum, what may mean
That deep, hoarse roar as of a troubled sea—
Freedom to Rome ! imperial Rome is free !
A noble victim at her altars slain,
Rome may her captive liberties regain :
O'er Cæsar fallen our pitying tears may flow,—
The cause of freedom sanctifies the blow !

Thus to the Bard of Avon, grasping Time
Hath yielded up his spoils, and every clime
To grace his triumph hath unlocked her store
Of treasured tales, and legendary lore.
Each age succeeding pays the tribute due,
And joins, his laureate honours to renew.
In each the sons of wit and song combine
To cast their votive offerings on his shrine.
To form his court of taste, *like this to night*,
With youth and beauty may they still unite,
With ripened manhood, and with sages hoar,
Till the last scene of human life is o'er.

VI.

Hail to the Bard ! whose high genius unfolded
 The volume of Nature, and taught us to scan
 The mystical mixture, which heaven has moulded
 To fashion the heart and the passions of man :
 Forth to the raptured view,
 From its deep fount he drew
 Each mingled feeling, whose magick control—
 Spurning the feeble chain
 Frail Reason forged, in vain—
 Shakes, rouses, maddens, or palsies the soul.

Long, with the Stagirite's unities round her,
 The Drama had languished ; led forth by the schools,
 Like an incubus, clanking the fetters, which bound her,
 To please full-grown children and black-letter fools :
 Cold, formal, heartless, trite,
 Cloying the appetite,
 False in expression, in action untrue—
 Like the dull forms that stare
 On China's splendid ware—
 Such were her scenes, such the portraits she drew.

Nature her favourite's thralldom lamented
 And called on her Shakspeare for counsel and aid ;
 The sweet Bard of Avon, with pleasure, consented,
 And vowed to redeem the disconsolate maid :

Genius his constant guide—
 Genius, with Truth allied—
 Treating the dogmas of schools with disdain ;
 Boldly her bonds he broke,
 Freed her from Folly's yoke,
 Winning the Drama to Nature again.

Wit joined the Bard's glowing standard, and blended
 The gleam of his smile with the shafts which he threw ;
 Fancy, delighted, his footsteps attended,
 Holding the Mirror of Nature to view :
 Lightly, with skilful hand,
 Waving her magick wand,
 Passion's proud dæmon her mandates obeyed ;
 Each feeling, thought, and look,
 Each Protean shape he took,
 Fancy, in Nature's bright mirror displayed.

Earth, air, and ocean, the Poet inspected,
 Culling their sweets for the chaplet he wove ;
 The richest and rarest from each he selected,
 And laved them in feeling and twined them with love :
 Charmed by his wondrous lay,
 Witch, fairy, sprite, and fay
 Came from their coverts, pool, cavern, or glen ;
 Moved by his potent spell,
 Ghosts left the grave to tell
 Fate's dark behests to the children of men.

Then Hail ! to the Bard, whose high genius unfolded
 The volume of Nature, and gave us to scan
 The mystical mixture, which heaven has moulded
 In framing the heart and the passions of man :

“ Fancy’s child,” hail to thee !

All hail !—our Jubilee

Faintly thy gifts and thy genius portrays ;

But, while thy works remain,

While Truth and Nature reign,

Ages unborn shall rejoice in thy praise.

P. S. The author could snatch but two or three hours from the cares of a family, a farm, and a publick house, in which to compose the preceding ode. He chose the hobbling structure of Scott’s “ Hail to the Chief,” more for the musick than the poetry. Should the judges, who are to pass upon it, find in this effort no “ thoughts that breathe,” they may at least find “ words that burn”—if they put them in the fire.

VII.

The tide of years, with silent sway,
 Hath rolled o'er Avon's tuneful billow,
 Since Albion blessed the golden day,
 Which smiled on Shakspeare's natal pillow.
 What though bright Poesy's green crown
 Drooped beneath Superstition's sky ;
 And Prejudice, with withering frown,
 Denied the meed to minstrelsy ;
 All hailed the bard, whose kindling glance
 Should chase the clouds of ignorance,
 That dimmed the mental eye :
 He, who, in future day, should rear
 The drama's dome, to virtue dear.

Sweet minstrel ! then her soft retreat
 Young Fancy left, with roses twined ;
 To tempt in youth thy truant feet,
 And weave her spells around thy mind.
 Then too, while soared the eagle high
 Where rolled the thunder-clouds in gloom ;
 Genius outstretched his arm in sky—
 Plucked from its wing the boldest plume—
 Thrice waved its point aloft in air—
 Thrice dipped it in the lightning's glare—
 Then, bright in heavenly bloom,

Flew to the earth and gave to thee
The gift of high sublimity !

To thee, then partial Nature gave
Her magick lyre, the heart to sweep ;—
To wake each passion from its grave,
Each soft emotion from its sleep.
Lo ! Virtue pleads against her doom
In Love's alarmed and speaking eye ;
While on Othello's brow of gloom
Broods the foul monster, Jealousy !
Behold in Lear's convulsive stare
The blighting spirit of Despair—
List Pity's stealing sigh,
As fruitless Nature o'er thee stood,
To touch thy heart, Ingratitude !

Now, rebel Murder gropes his way
To do the bloody deed of death ;
While royal Duncan's bright array
Sleeps in the halls of false Macbeth !
To plunge in proud Ambition's heart
Now Friendship bares the steel on high ;
And Rome's undaunted heroes start
To raise triumphant Freedom's cry !
Now Horror wakes in Hamlet's air—
His phrensied look—his wandering stare—
As in the cheerless sky
Stalks the unconjured ghost in gloom,
To tell the *son* the *parent's* doom !

Blest spirit ! now the circling sun
Sleeps upon Avon's silver wave ;
And casts its garniture upon
Thy lonely and secluded grave—
But long thy name shall live on high,
Inscribed upon the arch of story ;
And long thy laurel wave in sky,
Forever green in fadeless glory.
E'en now, on this auspicious day,
The drama fain to thee would pay
The honour of a pageantry :
Accept the meed—she owed it long
To genius, fancy, wit, and song.

VIII.

Genius claims the festival—

While before thy shrine we bend,
 Shade of Shakspeare, hear our call,
 Spirit of the Bard, descend !
 Come with thine immortal lyre,
 Strike the chords of living fire,
 Till our burning bosoms own
 The magick of its mighty tone.
 Shakspeare, Nature bows before thee,
 Unscathing waves Time's pinion o'er thee,
 Still the flowers thy fancy wreathed,
 And those high thoughts the feelings breathed,
 As purely glow, as brightly shine,
 As when, with energy divine,
 Thy soaring mind and matchless skill
 Subdued the passions to thy will.
 The emanation of thy soul
 Kindles like fire Prometheus stole—
 Thou smilest—tides of joy are rushing—
 Thou sighest—tears of grief are gushing—
 Hark ! 'tis thy clarion sounds, and far,
 Like gathering tempest, rolls the war,—
 While floating banners, flashing steel,
 And all, that Heroes, Patriots feel,
 Bursts on the heart, and chains the sense
 To bow to thine omnipotence.

Within the circle of thy spell
 The willing captive sits confined,
 Enters, with thee, Prospero's cell,
 With Ariel rides the wind ;
 Or hears sweet Isabella plead,
 Or trembles lest the Merchant bleed ;
 Or laughs in wildness of delight,
 While jests the fat, out-witted Knight.
 Then wild as fairy revelry,
 See the Summer's Dream flit by—
 Ah ! Love, would you concealment seek ?
 Then spare Viola's damask cheek ;
 Its changing hue betrays your power,
 As fades beneath the sun, the flower.
 But soft, here 's Rosalind so gay,
 With voice of mirth and brow of May,
 While care hath fled a heart so holy,
 To live with Jaques the melancholy.
 And "pretty Perdita" we hail,
 Whose fortunes are a "Winter's Tale ;"
 And free, as summer foliage springs,
 Lovers, ladies, clowns, and kings,
 Rise and sparkle, sport and shine
 In the gay, creating line,
 While Nature holds the glass so true,
 That Folly may her image view,
 Or Virtue, with an upward gaze,
 See all heaven before her blaze.

But now these laughing visions fly,
 Stern scenes arise,
 Macbeth stalks, in lightning, by,
 And good king Duncan dies ;
 And treacherous John hath grasped a crown ;
 And feeble Richard's fortunes frown ;
 While rival roses flout the sky,
This the crimson's sanguine die,
 Pallid *that* as northern snows,
 And the civil broils are raging,
 Fierce the brother-hosts engaging,
 While noble blood like water flows ;
 Till, ambition's sacrifice,
 The bold and bloody Richard dies.
 Then Rome to Coriolanus pleads,
 And Brutus strikes and Julius bleeds ;
 But the world is nought to Antony
 If Egypt's witching queen be by.
 Misjudging Timon rails at men ;
 While virtue crowns fair Imogen ;
 And weeps the poor distracted Lear,
 And Romeo dies on Juliet's bier,
 And the ghost hath breathed in Hamlet's ear
 "Revenge" against the murderer ;
 And Othello's gentle bride
 For her jealous lord hath died.

Thus the varied scenes arise
 In Shakspeare's glowing thought,

Bright hues and figures from the skies,
On nature's canvass wrought,
And yet so blended, so concealed,
The *human heart* is all revealed.
Oh, while the proudest names and ages,
With *his* praise inscribe their pages,
His soul, that spurned at tyranny,
Would claim affiance with the Free !
And *we*, who proudly boast to inherit
With his speech his quenchless spirit,
We will loudly sound his name,
Till our world echoes with his fame,
Fresh as spring our living fountains,
Everlasting as our mountains,
Nor earth shall mourn his Memory dead
Till *those* are parched, and *these* are fled.

IX.

Long had the world its darkened course pursued,
And Science drooped, by priestly craft subdued ;
Dread Superstition swayed her vengeful rod,
And untaught millions trembled at her nod.
Rude was the age, and savage every breast,
And fluttering Genius, weeping, sunk to rest.

But through this gloom of wild and black dismay,
The twilight burst, then sprung a new-born day.
The rising sun of Wisdom proudly gleams,
And Folly's midnight shrinks beneath her beams.
Then Genius waking, from her dream of night,
O'er Fancy's courses wings her rapid flight ;
And Science, smiling, hailed the joyful hour,
When Learning triumphed o'er despotick power.

As on the vapour cloud reflected rays,
In brilliant tints, the beauteous bow displays ;
Which Mercy dictates from her throne above,
The heavenly harbinger of peace and love ;
So Science shed her influence on the mind,
The heart instructed, and the age refined ;
Her beams to man a future pledge bestows,
Revives his hopes, and softens all his woes.

An era now had dawned upon the age,
 And through this vista, sprung the infant Stage.
 The Drama, then, its lovely temple reared,
 By virtue cherished, and by taste revered.
 This glittering fane the Gothick night illumed,
 And vandal pride and insolence entombed.

The Stage! A throne where sceptred Genius rules,
 Reclaims the rake, the unlearned rustick schools;
 Where Virtue stands the champion of its cause,
 Secures the Drama and protects its laws.
 Here hoary Wisdom bends to youthful years,
 With balmy precepts fills the listening ears,
 While sportive Innocence with ardent gaze,
 In mimic fancy oft repeats her lays.
 Here Slander dies: the scoffing fool, abashed,
 Forsakes his follies thus by satire lashed,
 And Vice will here, as in a mirror, trace
 Each odious feature of her haggard face.
 Here Love portrays the feelings of the heart,
 And blushing Beauty owns her magick art.
 Here Discord's visage beams with peaceful glow,
 Her bushy locks in graceful tresses flow;
 And black Despair, Revenge, inveterate Hate,
 Round Reason's altar join in close debate.
 Here green-eyed Jealousy, and pallid Grief,
 Find too their comfort, and their sweet relief;
 While Mirth's gay smile on every cheek is seen,
 And Hope and Pleasure crown the blissful scene.

mortal Shakspeare! 'tis to thee we raise
 A humble trophy to thy peerless praise.
 To thee the Drama owes its powerful sway,
 Led by thy genius from its infant day.
 And Avon's banks shall echo long thy fame,
 Lasting as its waters be thy name.
 O mortal Bard! the Muses' theme shall be,
 To dedicate this night their lays to thee.
 Apollo here shall each fond soul inspire
 With thrilling accents from his trembling lyre,
 And bold Euterpe melt the feeling hearts,
 When she thy praises in her song imparts.
 The world shall glory in a name like thine,
 And offer incense at thy holy shrine.

The western world had now emerged from night,
 By coruscations of the orient light;
 The sun of science here had lent its ray,
 And o'er Columbia dawned a brilliant day.
 In this blest spot where Freedom's temples tower,
 May the Drama find protecting power.
 May mild Instruction fill each scenick page,
 And Virtue prove the guardian of the stage.

Let reason here with taste and beauty join,
 And Wit and Genius round the Drama twine.
 May modest Merit, too, with Justice meet,
 And drive Intrusion from his usurped seat;
 While Truth's bold mirror, held to constant view,
 To every passion gives the colour true.

Then Vice, confused, shall quickly shun the place,
When she beholds the features of her face.

While Virtue, then, shall hold her goodly sway,
And man her precepts and her laws obey,
The Stage shall flourish through the world's vast clime,
And stand, unmoved, the powerful test of Time.

X.

When clouds of darkness had o'erspread the world,
 And men by ignorance were held in thrall,
 When wild fancy brooked not to be ruled,
 'Twas then the Tragick Muse, her sable pall
 Around her throwing, bade adieu to all
 Her loved abodes, where men no more would pay
 Her charms due reverence, or obey her call;
 For they preferred Romance's rhapsody
 To her lyre's notes of sad but sweetest melody.

'Twas then, when all her followers were lost,
 Far she retired to a dark and gloomy cell,
 Within a cypress-forest deep embossed,
 Where nightly dews, in noxious vapours, fell;
 There did she lay her down to weep and wail:
 And her golden lyre, which so oft had rung
 With richest strains, that now did nought avail
 (Though on them once in raptures men had hung),
 Now by her lay, neglected, and its chords unstrung.

At last she slept! But men, that passed by
 And looked into the cell, back shuddering drew;
 Ne wist they who she was that there did lie,
 With hair dishevelled, wet with chilling dew,

And face so deadly pale, yet fair to view ;
 None dared to touch her lyre where it lay,
 And certes of them all there were but few,
 Who, with deep terror struck, fled not away,
 Or could upon her look withouten deep dismay.

For in her features dark Melancholy
 Did lower fearfully ; and by her side
 There lay (awful sign of deeds unholy !)
 A dagger, which a father's blood had died,
 Or had been stained in horrid fratricide ;
 And near it lay a bowl, from which there flowed
 Black poison ! the drink of some fair bride,
 Whom her fierce lord, in fiendlike mood, had vowed
 To death, when green jealousy did his heart corrode.

At last came one, who took with trembling hand
 The lyre !—restrung its silver chords, and dared
 To strike ! so ravishing were the sounds and grand,
 That then,—(although at first he seemed afraid
 Lest his venturous strain should too loud be heard,)
 As if by phrensy fired, he struck the chords
 With strong and measured hand, as if prepared
 To stand the vengeance of her bloody sword :
 But still she slept and to his strains paid small regard.

By his example, others, bolder grown,
 Their former terror then began to lose,
 And now approached to try the lyre's sweet tone :
 But they with dreamis vile, in her repose

Fearful disquiet and unrest did cause ;
 And when, from dread affright, they shivering stood,
 To see her grasp the steel and knit her brows,
 As those that on her slumber did intrude,
 Lo ! up there rushed a fearless wight in wrathful mood.

Spurning the trembling fools that stood around,
 As if at their cowardice burned his ire,
 Phrensied by the lyre's heavenly sound,
 His wild eye glancing with poetic fire,
 He snatched from off the ground the abandoned lyre !
 And forth he pealed such sad and melting strain,
 (As if some god divine did him inspire,)
 That awful, listening silence did constrain,
 And none of all, I ween, from weeping could refrain.

But with his deepest, saddest strains yblent,
 Were heard to burst, at frequent intervals,
 From the lyre sounds of joy and merriment ;
 And Comedy, who in a neighbouring dell,
 Where crowds of rusticks their rude revels held,
 To loose voluptuous notes was striking,
 Carelessly, her lascivious timbrel,
 When she heard, on the soft breezes swelling,
 These notes of glee mixed with sullen sounds of wailing,

She left the revelling crowd to see
 Who mote be the wight that thus did mell
 Her sweet carols with such strange minstrelsy ;
 Ne did she deem that so near her dell

Her gloomy sister Tragedy did dwell :
 So in her hand her bright timbrel taking
 And causing around her sweet sounds to swell,
 She with free and careless joyaunce laughing,
Burst into the crowd that him around were trembling.

In moving strains, a tale of saddest wo
 He sung ! how goaded by the monster Jealousy,
 (To our poor mortal race that fellest foe,
 Foul imp of a distempered fantasy,
 That taints the purest deed with leprosy !)
 A noble Moor with cruel hand did slay
 His virtuous wife !—wrought to phrensy
 By a damned villain's arts, who oped the way
For the hellish monster on his heart to prey.

This piteous tale he had just begun,
 Which in sad echoes through the woods did ring,
 And all upon its mournful accents hung,
 When gleesome Comedy came bounding in :
 But when she heard these strains, her bright eye
 fixing
 Upon the minstrel, as the lyre he swept,
 She listened in silence scarcely breathing ;
 And to her soul by melody enrapt
Sorrow did seem so sweet, she hung her head and wept.

But then she looked with eye of fear askance
 Into the cave ; and there flashing dark light

She saw her fierce sister's terrific glance,
And, filled with terror, quick she turned to flight ;
But seeing this, I ween, the cunning wight
Changed his lay of sorrow, and quick did fly
To such witching strains of softening delight,
That certes he did force e'en Tragedy
To smile, " ymolten with his syren melody."

While he thus the changing chords did sweep,
And all now laughed aloud, now wept full sore,
Moved by his mingled notes of joy and grief,
The rival sisters, enemies no more,
Both to the bard eternal faith now swore ;
And both to him their power divine they told
How grief or gladness o'er the heart to pour,
By mirth to fill with joy the human soul,
Or over it to spread soft pity's pleasing dole.

XI.

I saw the Master of the drama stand,
Like some bright vision from a foreign land,
With all his glory far around him spread,
And all his laurels waving on his head—
The Passions, at his feet, a various crowd,
In mute submission to their master bowed.
Years had rolled o'er him—he was still the same,
The child of Fancy, and the heir of Fame;
Still the same spirit, in his burning eye,
Shone, undiminished in its energy;
And every slumbering Passion, when he spoke,
To vigorous action, at the sound awoke;
Wild Anger started with his glittering spear—
In Pity's eye arose the trembling tear—
Revenge, impatient, his loud trumpet blew,
And Love still closer to his master drew.
Bring forth, he cried, the children of my care;
Fresh, as I drew them, let them all appear.

Straight the Third Richard, in his robes appears,
In all the glory of his former years;
Fit to shed terror o'er a trembling land,
While Murder led him by his bloody hand.
Hope fled affrighted at his gloomy train,
Subduing Pity raised her hands in vain.

Next young Cordelia, in her matchless charms,
 Clasping her aged father in her arms,
 Walked slow and pensive ; while the big round tear
 Told all the sorrows of the royal Lear.

Grief was her story as her way she kept,
 And Love, who led her, at her sufferings wept.

Slowly she vanished from my eager view,
 And on Prince Hamlet, in his madness, drew.
 His were wild actions, and his words were wild ;
 Sometimes a hero, and sometimes a child.
 His theme was varied, yet it still betrayed
 To all, the part unreal, that he played.

Next came Othello with his matchless bride,
 As loved, and loving, in his arms she died.
 He wept, and kissed her, yet he madly swore,
 Well as he loved her, she should live no more ;
 No more, he cried,—thy pleadings were in vain,—
 O would to God, thou wert alive again.

His murmurs ceased, and royal in array
 The kings of old came marching on their way ;
 Dark were their forms, yet, far around them thrown,
 The light of diamonds and of beauty shone.
 Beauty, who loosened all her flowing curls,
 Jetty, and spangled with a thousand pearls ;
 Valour beside her was well pleased to tread,
 And Wit commended all she did or said.

Such are the pictures, which the master drew,
 Still fresh in beauty, and to nature true :

Time cannot change them—they will gain from years
That mellow richness, which most fair appears;
And future ages with delight shall dwell
On every picture, that we love so well.
Then, when thy magick shall enchant the soul,
When smiles shall waken, or when tears shall roll,
All hearts, enraptured, with a jubilee,
Unequalled Shakspeare, shall remember thee.

XII.

Power of the visioned throne, hail ! sceptred Thought !
 Of heaven-born lineage, inspiration-taught ;
 O'er time and space, thy empire vast extends,
 The past and present, earth and heavenly blends.

Hail ! wondrous genius ! thine the mighty power,
 With potent spell, at inspiration's hour,
 To array the past, retrace the march of time,
 And throng with life, the desolated clime ;
 Revive the deeds by fraud or greatness wrought ;
 Where glory fired, or heathen wisdom taught ;
 With power creative, conjure worlds unknown,
 Teeming with life, strange beings of thy own ;
 Or, soaring high in regions unconfined,
 Charm the rapt soul, and wing the mortal mind.

To what blest brow, the unfading wreath pertains ?
 The proudest meed, which Fame's high will ordains ?
 What chosen breast has inspiration fired
 With peerless flame ? What heaven-born soul attired
 In Fancy's robes ? and deigned her loftiest lyre,
 With varied tones, to thrill, amaze, inspire ?

To thee, great Shakspeare ! thee, her favourite child,
 She gave her wand, and on thy magick smiled ;

Thee, Bard of Avon ! master of the heart ;
 Lo ! Grecian greatness owns thy matchless art,
 And future ages, pageant honours raise,
 Award the palm, and celebrate thy praise.

Thy soul, capacious, Inspiration chose,
 To quaff her fount, and visioned worlds disclose ;
 Her magick mantle o'er thy senses threw,
 And spread her glories to thy raptured view—
 The secret depths of thought's ideal stores,
 The boundless height, thy phrensied glance explores ;
 Imagination gave her flighty wings,
 To fearless soar, and tempt the verge of things ;
 And playful Fancy's fairy hands attend,
 To airy build, or rainbow's colours blend.

To picture Nature in her varied dress,
 Where tempests rend, or zephyr winds caress ;
 In Alpine grandeur clothe the lofty scene,
 Or stretch the lawn in gently waving green,
 To flood all nature in day's golden stream,
 Or palely gild with moonlight's silver beam,
 Was thy unrivalled skill ; thy pencil true
 Sketched the green deeps, or caught the etherial blue ;
 Gay blooming Spring, or fruit-crowned Autumn smiled,
 And echo answered to " thy wood-note wild ;"
 Lo ! herald morn proclaims the god of day,
 Or western clouds reflect his parting ray ;
 Now noontide height in radiant splendour rides,
 Now curtained midnight all creation hides ;

Around each scene is thrown the witching spell—
 The poet's charm—the spirit forms that dwell
 In ocean, air, and earth, and cavern-cell.

But chief, transcendant shone thy graphic art
 In passion's maze, the regions of the heart ;
 To dive the depths, or trace the fountain source
 Of human action in its various course,
 To picture man, the inmost springs control ;
 Or hold the mirror to his blushing soul ;
 Each feature, foible, bias, strong impressed,
 The master-passion shining through the rest ;
 Thy page is motley life—a living scene,
 Of every age and sect, condition, mien,
 In life's great drama—where, controlled by thee,
 The winds and waves of passion's restless sea
 Are vexed or smoothed ; obedient to thy power,
 They gently waft in bliss, or threatening tower.

Ambition's course—the whirlwind of the mind—
 Mean, sordid Avarice, to his toil confined,
 Voluptuous Pleasure, tuned to festive strains,
 Or mad Revenge, with fury-boiling veins,
 Remorse' dark sea where floods of sorrow roll,
 Love's dreaming bliss, the siren of the soul,
 Beguiled, where, late, the gentle flame confessed,
 Bursts the volcano of the jealous breast.
 And rich thy verse, with maximed wisdom fraught,
 And endless metaphor, from nature caught :

T' unmask the impostor, folly's mark to hit,
 Darts awful truth, the brevity of wit ;
 Severe in censure, see the satire train
 Ply the keen scourge, exulting in the pain ;
 In comick mirth, behold, the prince of fun,
 The grotesque Falstaff! Humour's laughing son.

Thy tragick muse the scene of terror paints,
 And pallid Fear in screaming horror faints ;
 From the deep fount of human feeling, draws
 The pitying flood ; the icy region thaws
 Of stoick frost ; the sympathetick tear
 Balms the deep wound, or dewes the sable bier.
 The roll of time its moral lesson yields ;
 Intriguing senates, and embattled fields
 Live at thy touch ; react their sanguine deeds,
 And Roman greatness, or harangues, or bleeds,
 In more than mortal might.

Fresh from the dust,
 In all their pride, ambition, crimes, and lust,
 Rise Europe's kings, in regal trappings clad,
 Palsied by age, or by ambition, mad ;
 The fawning parasite obedient stands,
 To kindle hellish rage with Discord's brands,
 No crimes too foul, the ruffian hand to stay,
 Where Passion fires, Ambition points the way ;
 Aspiring woman gives the poisoned cup,
 To void the throne, and help her favourite up ;

The sorceress hags, the agency of hell,
With mystick phrase, and incantation's spell,
Work superstition in the struggling cause.

The graves disclose ! Death's awful veil withdraws !—
The murdered ghost terrifick, nightly steals
In silent gloom ! the secret crime reveals.
Lo ! guilty shades, uneasy in the earth,
Wrap their cold shrouds, and end the festive mirth.—
Enough.—In vain t' attempt thy wondrous maze,
May insect genius flutter round thy blaze :
Thy fame shall live with time ; thy art transcends all
praise.

XIII.

Coeval with the first Promethean ray,
 That kindled life within a shape of clay,
 Man's purpose seemed a wayward course to steer,
 And rush from vice to vice in full career.
 Race after race sprung rapid into birth,
 And crimes on crimes weighed down the passive earth;
 When Jove, grown tired to punish and destroy,
 Would fain some gentle remedy employ;
 E'en as the nurse her puny patient cheats,
 By serving wholesome drugs with tempting sweets.
 Straight, in a solemn council of the gods,
 He pledged, with one of his imperial nods,
 A greater boon than may a god decline,
 To any who solves best, the grand design,
 To rule, by lessons wrapt in pleasing guise,
 The heir and future tenant of the skies.

Now, giant Poetry, whose mighty spell
 Throws open heaven and rips up depths of hell—
 Each art and science, from the gravest lore
 Down to the sprightly maze of Terpsichore,
 In vain was summoned up, discussed, and tried!
 Not one the sought-for special lure supplied—
 The secret power the grown up babe to teach
 Without the harshness,—with the grace—of each :

The power of festive truth, which every guest
 Might keenly feel, yet let it pass for jest ;
 Of life's quaint image, where, to all unknown,
 Though seen by all, each might his likeness own ;
 Of some beguiling light, that to each seer
 Would cause his shadowed spirit to appear ;
 Of some attractive fictitious world of show,
 With busy forms and mirth-relieving woe,
 Where both the eye and ear together might
 Drink from one cup instruction and delight ;
 Pride, Folly, Ignorance, stripped of their veil,
 Be led on, at themselves to gaze and rail ;
 High-crested Vice sunk to a humble worm,
 By one fair glimpse of his own loathsome form :
 The mind, surprised, through each conspiring sense,
 And captive heart, probed deep without offence ;
 All chid, unpained by chiding tongues of fame,
 And shamed, without detection's dreaded shame :
 All by temptation from temptation won ;
 And Self-correction sharing Pleasure's throne !

Here, with a sportive, half-disdainful smile,
 Heaven's monarch pointed earth's revolving pile
 Now with a new unwonted burthen pressed—
 The car of Thespis borne upon her breast !
 At once the mystery was laid exposed—
 At once was read, by mortal hand disclosed,
 Eternity's long-sealed, long-hidden page,
 The birth, the growth, the progress of the stage !

Thus to the sons of men, who brought to view
 What baffled gods, the promised boon was due ;
 Which to bestow by lot the powers above
 Decreed, obedient to the will of Jove !
 The names of nations, living and unborn,
 Were forthwith cast into a golden urn ;
 Whence, as Chance held it, Fate, that owns no lord,
 Drew out the lots, and gave the passing word.
 The issue, to the gods alone revealed,
 For ages in heaven's archives lay concealed ;
 When, lo ! the destined hour rends Time's dark womb,
 And wrests it from Oblivion's silent tomb—

* * * * *

O happy Albion ! blest so much—so soon !—
 The lot is thine ! and Shakspeare is the boon !

Where Avon, bright, unwinds his glittering zone,
 There first the promised poet's birth-star shone :
 There, midst the fairy scenes, the inspired one strayed,
 And Nature, his sole guide, loved and obeyed ;
 Nursed on her bosom, cradled in her arms,
 And by her lips taught all her spells and charms.
 He spoke—'twas her own voice, soul-thrilling, wild—
 The mother's self spoke in her darling child !
 But when he waved her wand of magick might,
 And held her mystick mirror to the sight ;
 All naked there was seen the human heart,
 Despoiled of varnished mask and specious art :

Each hidden, deep recess explored at once,
 And all the inward man shown at a glance.
 The self-convicted villain trembling stood,
 And conscious murder shrunk aghast from blood ;
 Ambition, that, for wreck of nations toiled,
 With horror from the dark abyss recoiled ;
 Parental, conjugal, and filial love
 Exhaled the perfume of Elysian grove ;
 And monster Jealousy, self-scourged, self-fed,
 From its own Gorgon locks in terror fled !

Such is the wizard genius, in whose praise
 We dare this night our grateful pageant raise ;
 Whose glorious triumphs England's Roscius famed,
 Ere now, in publick jubilee, proclaimed ;
 And whom the ancients, worshipping his manes,
 Had plied with altars, crowns, and sculptured fanes !
 Smile, then, Columbia ! Albion's daughter fair !
 Smile on our efforts and our homage share !
 For, both, the lot, the boon, by grace divine,
 And right of heritage, are doubly thine !

XIV.

'Twas at a time Apollo stood in tears!
 The age of gold had gone—
 The Muses wandered to their home,
 No longer from their halls to roam,
 And e'en the eternal youth seemed pale with years!
 The nations at his feet
 In leaden silence meet,
 And mourn and wonder round his tuneless throne!
 But lo! a form appears,
 Borne on the coming years—
 Wrapt like a vision in his robe of air,
 A thousand hues are there!
 Yet, 'tis a form of earth;
 He treads like one of meaner birth;
 And still that splendid brow,
 Springs into divinity—
 The towering mount of poetry!
 And now,
 He comes! he comes! it is our child, Shakspeare!
 The sister choir
 On wings of fire,
 Oppressed with genius, smite the lyre,
 Till every wire
 Grows wild with song!

He's here—he's here—
Shakspeare !

And long
They would have pæned round Apollo's throne :
But, when the bard
Essayed to put their madness down,
Silent they stood, and gazed and heard,
While all the mortals lost,
Stared at his wildering power !
Within his hand,
Fashioned of subtle thought, a wand
He bare ;
He waved it round his revelling hair,
That streamed like banners to the air,
And cried " Appear !"

On inspiration tost
Enchanted Time
Called ages back
From their measureless track,
And past was present, at his word " Appear !"
The wand is waved,
And heroes who were graved
Beneath eternal Rome,
Come in their kingly pomp and kingly crowns,
Treading with Cæsar in their helms and gowns ;
Till Brutus stabs them down,
Then pass away in gloom !

But lo ! another wave,
 And from the grave
 Comes red-eyed Murder, of himself afraid !
 But hold ! he seeks a crown—
 And on his meteor blade
 Conscience has painted hell,
 Which none but woman shames him to outbrave !

Again ; another thing
 That would be England's king—
 Intent on prayers and blood !
 See how he plucks them down,
 Those gentle flowers, just blown,
 Making a curst ambition all his god.
 He dies—and see, a vestal train
 To melancholy musick's strain,
 Comes mingling with the tents, and casques, and plumes.
 A stately warrior there,
 Stands in the misty air,
 And while his boiling heart his country dooms,
 See Mercy, Tears, and Love,
 Illumined from above,
 Kneel down in eloquence of woe,
 Until the Bard himself begins to flow :
 The hero weeps—he turns—the victory's won !
 The suppliant mother gains her exiled son !

And now the scented air,
 Fanned up with pinions fair,

Small painted wings,
 And clustering, brilliant things,
 Made up of thought, and heaven, and mirth, and glee,
 And elfin minstrelsy,
 Drown the delighted sense :

And strange !

A wondrous change !

Revel is bursting all around—

Frolick is up

And shakes her curls,

While Bacchus' cup

With sack and nectar whirls !

He treads the trembling ground—

A mass of belted fun

A roaring tun !

Until old Laughter just to life holds on,

To see thy mountain wit, Sir John !

But lo ! the Bard hath lost the smile

That brightened for a while :

And now he calls on Love !

It is a silver night of Jove,

And eyes and lips are met,

In the young, white moonshine :

And see ! Love dares the tomb,

In mockery of Death,

While Frenzy comes to rend its gloom,

With blood and poison wet :

Alas ! one common wreath,

They desolately twine !

Again—see—see !

Dark Jealousy

With dagger, like his eye, side-gleaming—

The Furies bear him down,

And at their snaky frown

Bright Beauty with her fair hair streaming,

Dies with her smothered cry,

In her innocent dreaming !

Once more the magick wand

Is bowing at his mild command ;

And see ! a king appears,

White with the cold of years !

He's talking with the clouds,

Companioning with elements ;

Wrecked by Ingratitude—without a throne !

See how he looks upon the shrouds,

That seem to wave him hence !

And then that thorny crown—

Oh ! houseless, kingly impotence !

See how he sinks in Madness down,

Madness all pale and lone !

The Bard in sadness lowered—

He felt himself to madness grown,

And sunk before Apollo's throne,

By his own genius overpowered !

The Muses thronged around

The godlike mortal who avenged their cause,

And shouted, " Shakspeare," by Apollo crowned

A world's applause !

PRIZE POEMS.

PRIZE PROLOGUE,

WRITTEN BY ROBERT TREAT PAINE JUN. ON OPENING
THE FEDERAL-STREET THEATRE, BOSTON,
FEBRUARY 3, 1794.

WHEN, first, o'er Athens, learning's dawning ray
Gleamed the dim twilight of the Attick day,
To charm, improve, the hours of state repose,
The deathless father of the drama rose.
No gorgeous pageantry adorned the show,
The plot was simple, and the scene was low.
Without the wardrobe of the Graces, drest,
Without the mimic blush of Art, caressed,
Heroick Virtue held her throne secure,
For Vice was modest, and Ambition poor.

But soon the Muse, by nobler ardours fired,
To loftiest heights of scenick verse aspired.
From useful life her comick fable rose,
And curbless passions formed the tale of woes :
The daring Drama heaven itself explored,
And gods descending trod the Grecian board ;
Each scene expanding through the temple swelled,
Each bosom acted what each eye beheld ;

Warm to the heart, the chymick fiction stole,
And purged, by moral alchymy, the soul.

Hence artists graced and heroes nerved the age,
The sons or pupils of a patriot stage.
Hence, in this Forum of the virtues fired,
Hence, in this school of eloquence inspired,
With bolder crest, the dauntless warrior strode :—
With nobler tongue, the ardent statesman glowed ;
And Athens reigned Minerva of the globe ;
First, in the helmet—fairest, in the robe ;—
In arms she triumphed, as in letters shone,
Of taste the palace, and of war the throne.

But lo ! where, rising in majestick flight,
The Roman eagle sails the expanse of light !
His wings, like heaven's vast canopy, unfurled,
Spread their broad plumage o'er the subject world.
Behold ! he soars, where golden Phœbus rolls,
And perching on his car, o'erlooks the poles !
Far, as revolves the chariot's radiant way,
He wafts his empire on the tide of day ;
From where it rolls in yon bright sea of suns ;
To where in light's remotest ebb, it runs.

The globe half ravaged by the storm of war,
The gates of Greece admit the victor's car ;
Chained to his wheels is captive science led,
And taste transplanted blooms at Tyber's head.
O'er the rude minds of empire's hardy race,

The opening pupil beamed of lettered grace ;
 With charms so sweet, the houseless Drama smiled,
 That Rome adopted Athens' orphan child.
 Fledged by her hand, the Mantuan swan aspired ;
 Awed by her power, e'en Pompey's self retired ;
 Sheathed was the sword, by which a world had bled ;
 And Janus blushing to his temple fled :
 The globe's proud butcher grew humanely brave ;
 Earth staunch'd her wounds, and ocean hushed his
 wave.

At length, like huge Enceladus, depressed,
 Groaning with slavery's mountain on their breast,
 The supine nations struggled from disgrace,
 And Rome, like Ætna, tottered from her base.

Thus set the sun of intellectual light,
 And, wrapped in clouds, lowered on the Gothic
 night.

Dark gloomed the storm—the rushing torrent poured,
 And wide the deep Cimmerian deluge showered ;
 E'en learning's loftiest hills were covered o'er,
 And seas of dulness rolled, without a shore.
 Yet ere the surge Parnassus' top o'erflowed,
 The banished Muses fled their blest abode.
 Frail was their ark, the heaven-topped seas too brave,
 The wind their compass, and their helm the wave ;
 No port to cheer them, and no star to guide,
 From clime to clime, they roved the billowy tide ;

At length by storms and tempests wafted o'er,
They found an Ararat on Albion's shore.

Yet long so sterile proved the ravaged age,
That scarcely seemed to vegetate the stage ;
Nature, in dotage, second childhood mourned,
And to her infant cradle had returned.
But hark ! her mighty Rival sweeps the strings ;
Sweet Avon, flow not !—'tis thy Shakspeare sings !
With Blanchard's wing, in fancy's heaven he soars ;
With Herschel's eye, another world explores !
Taught by the tones of his melodious song,
The scenick Muses tuned their barbarous tongue,
With subtle powers the crudest soul refined,
And warmed the Zembla of the frozen mind.
The world's new queen, Augusta, owned their charms,
And clasped the Grecian nymphs in British arms.

Then shone the Drama with imperial art,
And made a province of the human heart.
What nerve of verse can sketch the extatick view,
When she and Garrick sighed their last adieu !
Description but a shadow's shade appears,
When Siddons looks a nation into tears !

But ah ! while thus unrivalled reigns the Muse,
Her soul o'erflows and grief her face bedews ;
Sworn at the altar, proud Oppression's foe,
She weeps, indignant, for her Britain's woe.
Long has she cast a fondly wishful eye,
On the pure climate of this western sky ;

And now, while Europe bleeds at every vein,
 And pinioned forests shake the crimsoned main ;
 While Gallia, walled by foes, collected stands,
 And hurls her thunders from an hundred hands :—
 Lured by a clime, where, hostile arms afar,
 Peace rolls luxurious in her dove-drawn car ;
 Where Freedom first awoke the human mind,
 And broke the enchantment which enslaved man-
 kind ;

Behold ! Apollo seeks this liberal plain,
 And brings the Thespian goddess in his train.
 Oh ! happy realm ! to whom are richly given
 The noblest bounties of indulgent heaven ;
 To whom has earth her wealthiest mine bestowed,
 And commerce bridged old Ocean's broadest flood ;
 To you, a stranger guest, the Drama flies :
 An angel wanders in a pilgrim's guise !
 To charm the fancy and to feast the heart,
 She spreads the banquet of the scenick art.
 By you supported, shall her infant stage
 Pourtray, adorn, and regulate the age.
 When rages faction with intemperate sway,
 And grey-haired Vices shame the face of day ;
 Drawn from their covert to the indignant Pit,
 Be such the game to stock the park of Wit ;
 That park where Genius all his shafts may draw,
 Nor dread the terrors of a forest law.
 But not to scenes of pravity confined,
 Here polished life an ample field shall find ;

Reflected here, its fair perspective view,
The Stage, the Camera—the landscape, you.

Ye lovely fair, whose circling beauties shine,
A radiant Galaxy of charms divine ;
Whose gentle hearts those tender scenes approve,
Where Pity begs, or kneels adoring Love :—

Ye Sons of Sentiment, whose bosoms fire
The song of pathos, and the epick lyre !
Whose glowing souls with tragick grandeur rise,
When bleeds a hero, or a nation dies :—

And ye, who, throned on high, a Synod sit,
And rule the lofty atmosphere of wit ;
From whom a flash of comick lightning draws
A bursting thunder-clap of loud applause :—
If here, those eyes, whose tears with peerless sway,
Have wept the vices of an age away ;
If here, those lips, whose smiles, with magick art,
Have laughed the foibles from the cheated heart,
In Sorrow's breast, one passioned sigh excite ;
On Mirth's gay cheek, one sparkling dimple light,
With nobler streams the buskin's grief shall fall,
With pang sublimer thro' this breathing wall.
Thalia too, more blithe shall trip the stage,
Of care the wrinkles smooth, and thaw the veins of
age.

And now, Thou Dome, by Freedom's patrons
reared,
With Beauty blazoned, and by Taste revered :
Apollo consecrates thy walls profane,
Hence be Thou sacred to the Muse's reign !
In Thee three ages shall in one conspire ;—
A Sophocles shall swell his chastened lyre ;
A Terence rise, in native charms serene ;
A Sheridan display the perfect scene :
And Athens, Rome, Augusta, blush to see,
Their Virtue, Beauty, Grace, all shine,—combined
in Thee.

PRIZE PROLOGUE,

WRITTEN BY CHARLES SPRAGUE, OF BOSTON, ON THE
OPENING OF THE NEW YORK THEATRE,
SEPTEMBER 1, 1821.

When mitred Zeal, in wild, unholy days,
Bared his red arm, and bade the fagot blaze,
Our patriot sires the pilgrim sail unfurled,
And Freedom pointed to a rival world.

Where prowled the wolf, and where the hunter roved,
Faith raised her altars to the God she loved ;
Toil, linked with Art, explored each savage wild,
The lofty forest bowed, the desert smiled ;
The startled Indian o'er the mountains flew,
The wigwam vanished, and the village grew ;
Taste reared her domes, fair Science spread her page,
And Wit and Genius gathered round the Stage !

The Stage !—where Fancy sits, creative queen,
And waves her sceptre o'er life's mimick scene ;
Where young-eyed Wonder comes to feast his sight,
And quaff instruction while he drinks delight.—
The Stage !—that threads each labyrinth of the soul,
Wakes laughter's peal, and bids the tear-drop roll ;

That hoots at folly, mocks proud fashion's slave,
Uncloaks the hypocrite, and brands the knave.

The child of Genius, catering for the Stage,
Rifles the wealth of every clime and age.
He speaks ! the sepulchre resigns its prey,
And crimson life runs through the sleeping clay.
The wave, the gibbet, and the battle field,
At his command, their festering tenants yield.
Pale, bleeding Love comes weeping from the tomb,
That kindred softness may bewail her doom ;
Murder's dry bones, reclothed, desert the dust,
That after times may own his sentence just ;
Forgotten Wisdom, freed from death's embrace,
Reads awful lessons to another race ;
And the mad tyrant of some ancient shore,
Here warns a world that he can curse no more.

May this fair Dome, in classic beauty reared,
By Worth be honoured, and by Vice be feared.
May chastened Wit here bend to Virtue's cause,
Reflect her image, and repeat her laws ;
And Guilt, that slumbers o'er the sacred page,
Hate his own likeness, shadowed from the Stage.
Here let the Guardian of the Drama sit,
In righteous judgment o'er the realms of wit.
Not his the shame, with servile pen to wait
On private friendship, or on private hate ;
To flatter fools, or Satire's javelin dart,
Tipped with a lie, at proud Ambition's heart.

His be the nobler task to herald forth
 Young, blushing Merit, and neglected Worth ;
 To brand the page where goodness finds a sneer,
 And lash the wretch that breathes the treason here.

Here shall bright Genius wing his eagle flight,
 Rich dew-drops shaking from his plumes of light,
 Till, high in mental worlds, from vulgar ken
 He soars, the wonder and the pride of men.
 Cold Censure here to decent Mirth shall bow,
 And Bigotry unbend his monkish brow ;
 Here Toil shall pause, his ponderous sledge thrown by,
 And Beauty bless each strain with melting eye.
 Grief, too, in fiction lost, shall cease to weep,
 And all the world's rude cares be laid to sleep.
 Each polished scene shall Taste and Truth approve,
 And the Stage triumph in the people's love.

PRIZE PROLOGUE,

WRITTEN BY CHARLES SPRAGUE, OF BOSTON, ON THE
OPENING OF THE NEW PHILADELPHIA THEATRE,
DECEMBER 1, 1822.

When learning slumbered in the convent's shade,
And holy craft the groping nations swayed,
By dulness banned, the Muses wandered long,
Each lyre neglected, and forgot each song;
Till Heaven's bright halo wreathed the Drama's dome,
And great Apollo called the pilgrims home.
Then their glad harps, that charmed old Greece, they
 swept,
Their altars thronged, and joy's high sabbath kept.
Young Genius there his glorious banners reared,
To float forever loved, forever feared.
The cowl's device, the cloister's legend known,
Old Superstition tumbled from his throne;
Back to his cell the king of gloom retired,
The buskin triumphed, and the world admired!

Since that proud hour, through each unfettered age,
The sons of light have clustered round the stage.
From Fiction's realms her richest spoils they bring,
And Pleasure's walls with Rapture's echoes ring.

Here hermit Wisdom lays his mantle down,
 To win with smiles the heart that fears his frown ;
 In mirth's gay robe he talks to wondering youth,
 And Grandeur listens to the stranger, Truth.
 Beauty, with bounding heart and tingling ear,
 Melts at the tale to love and feeling dear.
 Their sacred bowers the sons of learning quit,
 To rove with fancy, and to feast with wit.
 All come to gaze, the valiant and the vain,
 Virtue's bright troop, and Fashion's glittering train :
 Here Labour rests, pale Grief forgets her wo,
 And Vice, that prints his slime on all below,
 Even Vice looks on !—For this the Stage was reared,
 To scourge the fiend, so scorned and yet so feared.
 The halls of judgment, as the moral school,
 His foot defiles, the bronzed and reckless fool :
 God's lovely temple shall behold him there,
 With eye upturned, and aspect false as fair ;
 Even at the altar's very horns he stands,
 And breaks and blesses with polluted hands.
 Then hither let the unblushing villain roam,
 Satire shall knot its whip and strike it home.
 The stage one groan from his dark soul shall draw,
 That mocks religion, and that laughs at law !

To grace the stage, the bard's careering mind
 Seeks other worlds, and leaves his own behind :
 He lures from air its bright, unprisoned forms,
 Breaks through the tomb, and death's dull region storms.

O'er ruined realms he pours creative day,
And slumbering kings his mighty voice obey.
From its damp shroud the long-laid spirit walks,
And round the murderer's bed in vengeance stalks.
Poor maniac beauty brings her cypress wreath,
Her smile a moon-beam o'er a blasted heath ;
Round some cold grave she comes, sweet flowers to
strew,

And lost to reason, still to love is true.
Hate shuts his soul when dove-eyed Mercy pleads ;
Power lifts the axe, and Truth's bold servant bleeds ;
Remorse drops anguish from his burning eyes,
Feels hell's eternal worm, and, shuddering, dies.
War's trophied minion, too, forsakes the dust,
Grasps his worn shield, and waves his sword of rust,
Springs to the slaughter at the trumpet's call,
Again to conquer, or again to fall.

With heads to censure, yet with souls to feel,
Friends of the Stage ! receive our frank appeal.
No suppliant lay we frame ; acquit your trust ;
The Drama guard ; be gentle, but be just !
Within her courts, unbribed, unslumbering, stand ;
Scourge lawless Wit, and leaden Dulness brand,
Lash pert Pretence, but bashful Merit spare ;
His firstlings hail, and speak the trembler fair ;
Yet shall he cast his cloud, and proudly claim
The loftiest station and the brightest fame.
So from his perch, through seas of golden light,
Our mountain eagle takes his glorious flight :

To heaven the monarch bird exulting springs,
 And shakes the night-fog from his mighty wings.
 Bards all our own shall yet enchant their age,
 And pour redeeming splendour o'er the Stage.
 For them, for you, Truth hoards a nobler theme,
 Than ever blessed young Fancy's sweetest dream.
 Bold hearts shall kindle, and bright eyes shall gaze,
 When genius wakes the tale of other days,
 Sheds life's own lustre o'er each holy deed
 Of Him who planted, and of Him who freed !

And now, Fair Pile, thou chaste and glorious shrine,
 Our fondest wish, our warmest smile be thine ;
 The home of genius and the court of taste,
 In beauty raised, be thou by beauty graced.
 Within thy walls may Wit's adorers throng,
 To drink the magick of the poet's song :
 Within thy walls may youth and goodness draw
 From every scene a lecture, or a law.
 So bright the fane, be priest and offering pure,
 And friends shall bless, and bigot foes endure :
 Long, long be spared to echo truths sublime,
 And lift thy pillars through the storms of time.

PRIZE ADDRESS,

WRITTEN BY THOMAS WELLS, OF BOSTON, FOR THE
NEW ORLEANS THEATRE, DECEMBER 1823.

When first, o'er Learning, Persecution trod,
And fettered Letters felt his iron rod ;
Long, long in darkness bound, the Muses slept,
Each haunt left bardless, and each harp unswept ;
Till, bursting through the gloom, dramatick fire
Apollo darted o'er each slumbering lyre ;
Through clouds of dulness shot his Attick light,
And chased the shades of Superstition's night ;
Loud pæans, then, broke forth from every tongue,—
The temples echoed,—and the chorus rung.
Warm with new soul, young Musick smote the strings,
To Song gave life—to Inspiration wings !
Genius, by Freedom roused, shook off his yoke,
And from his deep oblivious dream awoke !
Awoke ! and saw the Drama's towering dome
Swell its asylum arch, and call him home ;—
Allured to higher worlds, he took his flight,
And rose to realms of empyrean height ;
Explored the winding paths of Fiction's bowers,
And gathered, for the Stage, his deathless flowers ;

Her ample page, redeeming Learning spread,
 And, o'er the night of Mind, her radiance shed ;
 Taste polished life,—the arts refined the age—
 And Virtue triumphed as she reared the Stage.

Patrons!—this night, our cause to you we trust,
 As guardians of the Drama's rights—be just!—
 Support from you, the child of Thespis draws,
 Warms in your sun, and thrives on your applause ;
 At your tribunal, he expectant stands,
 And craves indulgent judgment at your hands ;
 Your willing smiles, then, let his efforts share,
 And, to your shelter, take the Buskin's heir!—
 O, let your presence, let your plaudits, cheer
 Our Protean toil, and give us welcome here ;
 And yet, not purchased favour we would ask ;
 Unbiassed, and unbought, fulfil your task.
 Before your critick bench, we humbly bend,
 And, to your righteous voice, ourselves commend ;—
 No servile suppliants, to your court, we sue,
 But praise and censure claim alike from you ;
 Assembled here, to your decree submit,
 And hail in you the arbiters of wit.

And now, in scenick beauty drest, thou Dome—
 The shield of Morals, and of Song the home,—
 The nurse of Eloquence, the school of Taste,
 Hence, be thy altars by the Muses graced.
 Within thy walls, perhaps, by Genius led,
 Shall future Shakspeares sing, or Garricks tread ;

In Roman grace and majesty of mien,
Some Kemble reign, the monarch of the scene ;
Her fire of soul, some Siddons here impart,
Shoot through each quivering nerve, and storm the
heart.

On rapid wing, still speeds the auspicious time,
When Bards our own the Olympick Mount shall climb ;
When round their consecrated shrines shall throng
Our buskined heroes, and our sons of song ;
In Attick pride, our Drama then shall rise,
And nobly daring, claim the Thespian prize ;
To classick height exalt the rising age,
And give to peerless, lasting fame the Stage.

ADDRESS.

The following Address was written for the prize at New Orleans,
and forwarded in due time, but was unsuccessful.

When Gothic fury spoiled the realms of taste,
And Ruin sat, cold raven of the waste,
The Drama's minstrels bade their shrines farewell,
The canvass mouldered, and the marble fell ;
Believing man confessed the crosier's sway,
And holy darkness round creation lay.

At length, bright Genius, starting from his sleep,
Morn's herald angel, swept the mantling deep.
Then shrank the flood !—again the Stage was reared,
And Dulness fled, to curse the foe he feared.
From shore to shore the scenick dayspring played,
Illumed the court, and flashed along the shade :—
Sweetly it glanced o'er Arno's tuneful stream,
And Gallia's laughing vine-hills caught the beam ;
Round Albion's cliffs it poured undying fire,
And Nature's Bard bade Nature's sons admire !

Time shook his plumes—yet sighed the Muse to grace
A prouder empire, and a purer race.
Lo ! from a fettered world she comes in light,
And earth's young realm puts off its heathen night.

For Freedom's ear the maiden strikes her notes,
 And steps in beauty where his banner floats.
 Still to the glowing West she moves to sing,
 Where Rome's exploring bird ne'er bathed his wing,
 Till, snow-crowned hills and sun-kissed valleys past,
 Here, Gallia's offspring hails her sight at last !

Child of Renown ! before whose infant hand,
 The wreathed invader withered from the land,
 Thy Deed shall freshen on the penman's page,
 The shame and glory of a wondering age,
 And still reviving in the poet's lay,
 Thrill the young warrior of some distant day.
 In arms supreme, come forth, to greatness dear,
 Protect the pilgrim, and the patriot cheer ;
 Thy slumbering shield with olive garlands dressed,
 Rise ! crowned by Science, Monarch of the West !

And thou, inspiring Dome ! to greet thy reign,
 The Muse, exulting, pours her prophet strain.
 For thee the bard shall draw, from every clime,
 The swelling triumph, and the curtailed crime ;
 Death's moss-grown gates unbar, the sleepers wake,
 To charm the good, and bid the guilty quake ;
 Love's moonlight scene, War's crimson deed unfold,
 And all the legends of the days of old.

Wisdom and Wit thy guardian priests shall stand,
 And Taste refine, as Truth reforms the land ;

Rapture and Grief their rose and cypress twine,
 And every heart go mended from thy shrine.
 Here pranking youth shall learn, in Pleasure's school,
 To hate the folly, and to shun the fool ;
 Vice, saddening here, shall live for purer days,
 And Goodness sanction, while her children gaze ;
 Learning shall close his page for thy white hour,
 And love-lipped Beauty leave her evening bower,
 With soul all gladness, and with eye all light,
 To hail thy altar, and to bless thy rite.

Here, too, O kindling thought ! when Time shall shed
 His holy incense o'er the mighty dead,
 For thee the Sage shall burst his sacred grave,
 To guide in death the realm he lived to save ;
 For thee the Chief revive the battle's roar,
 And wake the sons, whose sires he led before.

Thus shalt thou triumph, decked with every grace,
 To charm another and another race ;
 And, one long day of quenchless splendour past,
 Blessed by thy beamy god, in glory go at last !

PROLOGUES, ODES, &c.

ENGLISH.

PROLOGUE TO CATO. 1713.*POPE.*

To wake the soul by tender strokes of art,
 To raise the genius, and to mend the heart ;
 To make mankind, in conscious virtue bold,
 Live o'er each scene, and be what they behold :
 For this the tragick Muse first trod the stage,
 Commanding tears to stream through every age ;
 Tyrants no more their savage nature kept,
 And foes to virtue wondered how they wept.

Our author shuns by vulgar springs to move
 The hero's glory, or the virgin's love ;
 In pitying love, we but our weakness show,
 And wild ambition well deserves its wo.
 Here tears shall flow from a more generous cause,
 Such tears as patriots shed for dying laws :
 He bids your breasts with ancient ardour rise,
 And calls forth Roman drops from British eyes.
 Virtue confessed in human shape he draws,
 What Plato thought, and godlike Cato was :
 No common object to your sight displays,
 But what with pleasure Heaven itself surveys,—
 A brave man struggling in the storms of fate,

And greatly falling with a falling state.
 While Cato gives his little senate laws,
 What bosom beats not in his country's cause ?
 Who sees him act, but envies every deed ?
 Who hears him groan, and does not wish to bleed ?
 Even when proud Cæsar, 'midst triumphal cars,
 The spoils of nations, and the pomp of wars,
 Ignobly vain, and impotently great,
 Showed Rome her Cato's figure drawn in state :
 As her dead father's reverend image passed,
 The pomp was darkened, and the day o'ercast ;
 The triumph ceased, tears gushed from every eye ;
 The world's great victor passed unheeded by ;
 Her last good man dejected Rome adored,
 And honoured Cæsar's less than Cato's sword.

Britons, attend ; be worth like his approved,
 And show you have the virtue to be moved.
 With honest scorn the first famed Cato viewed
 Rome learning arts from Greece, whom she subdued :
 Our scene precariously subsists too long
 On French translation, and Italian song.
 Dare to have sense yourselves ; assert the stage,
 Be justly warmed with your own native rage :
 Such plays alone should please a British ear,
 As Cato's self had not disdained to hear.

PROLOGUE,

WRITTEN FOR THE OPENING OF DRURY-LANE THEATRE
1747. BY JOHNSON.

When Learning's triumph o'er her barbarous foes
First reared the Stage, immortal Shakspeare rose ;
Each change of many-coloured life he drew,
Exhausted worlds, and then imagined new :
Existence saw him spurn her bounded reign,
And panting Time toiled after him in vain ;
His powerful strokes presiding Truth imprest,
And unresisted Passion stormed the breast.
Then Jonson came, instructed from the school,
To please in method, and invent by rule ;
His studious patience, and laborious art,
By regular approach assayed the heart :
Cold approbation gave the lingering bays ;
For those, who durst not censure, scarce could praise.
A mortal born, he met the general doom,
But left, like Egypt's kings, a lasting tomb.

The wits of Charles found easier ways to fame,
Nor wished for Jonson's art, or Shakspeare's flame ;
Themselves they studied, as they felt they writ ;
Intrigue was plot, obscenity was wit.
Vice always found a sympathetick friend ;
They pleased their age, and did not aim to mend.

Yet bards like these aspired to lasting praise,
 And proudly hoped to pimp in future days :
 Their cause was general, their supports were strong,
 Their slaves were willing, and their reign was long ;
 Till Shame regained the post that Sense betrayed,
 And Virtue called oblivion to her aid.

Then crushed by rules, and weakened as refined,
 For years the power of Tragedy declined :
 From bard to bard the frigid caution crept,
 Till Declamation roared, whilst Passion slept ;
 Yet still did Virtue deign the stage to tread,
 Philosophy remained, though Nature fled.
 But forced at length her ancient reign to quit,
 She saw great Faustus lay the ghost of wit ;
 Exulting Folly hailed the joyful day,
 And Pantomime and Song confirmed her sway.

But who the coming changes can presage,
 And mark the future periods of the stage ?
 Perhaps, if skill could distant times explore,
 New Behns, new Durseys, yet remain in store ;
 Perhaps, where Lear has raved, and Hamlet died,
 On flying cars new sorcerers may ride ;
 Perhaps (for who can guess th' effects of chance ?)
 Here Hunt may box, or Mahomet may dance.

Hard is his lot, that, here by fortune placed,
 Must watch the wild vicissitudes of taste :

With every meteor of caprice must play,
 And chase the new-blown bubble of the day.
 Ah! let not censure term our fate our choice,—
 The stage but echoes back the publick voice ;
 The Drama's laws the Drama's patrons give,
 For we, that live to please, must please to live.

Then prompt no more the follies you decry,
 As tyrants doom their tools of guilt to die ;
 'Tis yours this night to bid the reign commence
 Of rescued Nature, and reviving Sense ;
 To chase the charms of sound, the pomp of show,
 For useful mirth and salutary wo ;
 Bid scenick Virtue form the rising age,
 And Truth diffuse her radiance from the stage.

GARRICK'S ODE,

ON DEDICATING A BUILDING AND ERECTING A STATUE
TO SHAKSPEARE, AT STRATFORD-UPON-AVON.

To what blest genius of the isle
 Shall gratitude her tribute pay,
 Decree the festive day,
 Erect the statue, and devote the pile?
 Do not your sympathetic hearts accord,
 To own the bosom's Lord?
 'Tis he! 'tis he!—that demi-god!
 Who Avon's flowery margin trod;
 While sportive Fancy round him flew,
 Where Nature led him by the hand,
 Instructed him in all she knew,
 And gave him absolute command!
 'Tis he!—'tis he!
 The god of our idolatry!

To him the song, the edifice we raise;
 He merits all our wonder, all our praise!
 Yet ere impatient joy break forth
 In sounds that lift the soul from earth;
 And to our spell-bound minds impart
 Some faint idea of his magick art;

Let awful silence still the air ;
 From the dark cloud, the hidden light
 Bursts tenfold bright !

Prepare ! prepare ! prepare !
 Now swell at once the choral song,
 Roll the full tide of harmony along ;
 Let Rapture sweep the trembling strings,
 With Fame, expanding all her wings,
 With all her trumpet-tongues proclaim
 The loved, revered, immortal name,
 Shakspeare ! Shakspeare ! Shakspeare !

Let the enchanting sound
 From Avon's shores resound ;
 Through the air
 Let it bear
 The precious freight the envious nations round !
 Though Philip's famed immortal son,
 Had every blood-stained laurel won,
 He sighed, that his creative word
 (Like that which rules the skies)
 Could not bid other nations rise,
 To glut his yet unsated sword :
 But when our Shakspeare's matchless pen,
 Like Alexander's sword had done with men,
 He heaved no sigh, he made no moan ;
 Not limited to human kind,
 He fired his wonder-teeming mind,
 Raised other worlds and beings of his own !

Oh ! from his muse of fire
 Could but one spark be caught,
 Then might these humble strains aspire,
 To tell the wonders he has wrought ;
 To tell,—how, sitting on his magick throne,
 Unaided and alone,
 In dreadful state
 The subject Passions round him wait ;
 Whom, though unchained, and raging there,
 He checks, inflames, or turns their mad career
 With that superior skill,
 Which winds the fiery steed at will ;
 He gives the awful word,
 And they all foaming, trembling, own him for their
 lord.

With these his slaves, he can control
 Of charm the soul ;
 So realized are all his golden dreams
 Of terror, pity, love, and grief ;
 Though conscious that the vision only seems,
 The wo-struck mind finds no relief :
 Ingratitude would drop the tear,
 Cold-blooded age take fire,
 To see the thankless children of old Lear
 Spurn at their king and sire !
 With his our reason too grows wild !
 What nature had disjoined,
 What poet's power combined,
 Madness and age, ingratitude and child !

Ye guilty, lawless tribe,
 Escaped from punishment by art or bribe,
 At Shakspeare's bar appear ;
 No bribing, and no shuffling there !
 His genius, like a rushing flood,
 Cannot be withstood ;
 Out bursts the penitential tear :
 The look appalled the crime reveals ;
 The marble-hearted monster feels,
 Whose hand is stained with blood.

When our magician, more inspired,
 By charms, and spells, and incantations fired,
 Exerts his most tremendous power,
 The thunder growls, the heavens lower,
 And to his darkened throne repair
 The dæmons of the deep, and spirits of the air.

But soon those horrors pass away,
 Through storms and night breaks forth the day ;
 He smiles :—They vanish into air !
 The buskined warriors disappear !
 Mute the trumpets, mute the drums ;
 The scene is changed ; Thalia comes !
 Leading the nymph Euphrosyne,
 Goddess of joy and liberty !
 She and his sisters hand in hand,
 Linked to a numerous frolick band,
 With roses and with myrtle crowned,

Oh ! from his muse of fire
 Could but one spark be caught,
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 Leading the nymph Euphrosyne,
 Goddess of joy and liberty !
 She and his sisters hand in hand,
 Linked to a numerous frolick band,
 With roses and with myrtle crowned,

O'er the green velvet lightly bound,
 Circling the monarch of the enchanted land !

With kindling cheeks, and sparkling eyes,
 Surrounded thus, the bard in transport lies ;
 The little Loves, like bees,
 Clustering and climbing up his knees,
 His brows with roses bind ;
 While fancy, wit, and humour, spread
 Their wings, and hover round his head,
 Impregnating his mind ;
 Which turning soon, as soon brought forth,
 Not a tiny spurious birth,
 But out a mountain came,
 A mountain of delight !
 Laughter roared to see the sight,
 And *Falstaff* was his name !
 With sword and shield he puffing strides,
 The joyous revel rout
 Receive him with a shout,
 And modest Nature holds her sides.
 No single power the deed had done,
 But great and small,
 Wit, fancy, humour, whim, and jest,
 The huge misshapen heap impressed,
 And, lo !—Sir John !
 A compound of them all,
 A comick world in one !

Sweet swan of Avon ; ever may thy stream
 Of tuneful numbers be the darling theme ;
 Not Thames himself, who in his silver course
 Triumphant rolls along
 Britannia's riches, and his force,
 Shall more harmonious flow in song.
 Oh ! had those bards, who charm the listening
 shore
 Of Cam and Isis, tuned their classick lays,
 And from their full and precious store
 Vouchsafed to fairy-haunted Avon praise ;
 Nor Greek nor Roman strains would flow along
 More sweetly clear or more sublimely strong ;
 Nor thus a shepherd's feeble notes reveal
 The weakest numbers, and the warmest zeal.

Look down, blest spirit ! from above,
 With all thy wonted gentleness and love ;
 And as the wonders of thy pen,
 By heaven inspired,
 To virtue fired
 The charmed, astonished sons of men :
 With no reproach, e'en now, thou view'st thy work,
 Where no alluring mischiefs lurk,
 To taint the mind of youth ;
 Still to thy native spot thy smiles extend,
 And as thou giv'st it fame, that fame defend ;
 And may no sacrilegious hand
 Near Avon's banks be found,

To dare to parcel out the land,
And limit Shakspeare's hallowed ground ;
For ages free, still be it unconfined,
As broad, and general, as thy boundless mind.

Can British gratitude delay
To him, the glory of this isle,
To give the festive day,
The song, the statue, and devoted pile,
To him, the first of poets, best of men !
“ We ne'er shall look upon his like again !”

VERSES

WRITTEN TO BE SPOKEN BY MRS. SIDDONS, AT HER
BENEFIT, APRIL 27, 1795.
ROGERS.

Yes, 'tis the pulse of life ! my fears were vain !
I wake, I breathe, and am myself again,
Still in this nether world ! no seraph yet—
Nor walks my spirit when the sun is set,
With troubled step to haunt the fatal board
Where I died last—by poison or the sword ;
And blanch each honest cheek with deeds of night,
Done here so oft by dim and doubtful light.

To drop all metaphor, that little bell
Called back reality, and broke the spell.
No heroine claims your tears with tragick tone ;
A very woman—scarce restrains her own !
Can she, with fiction, charm the cheated mind,
When to be grateful is the part assigned ?
Ah, no ! she scorns the trappings of her art ;
No theme but truth, no prompter but the heart.

But, ladies, say, must I alone unmask ?
Is here no other actress, let me ask ?
Believe me, those who best the heart dissect,
Know, every woman studies stage effect :

She moulds her manners to the part she fills,
 As instinct teaches, or as humour wills ;
 And, as the grave or gay her talent calls,
 Acts in the drama, till the curtain falls.

First, how her little breast with triumph swells,
 When the red coral rings its silver bells !
 To play in pantomime is then the rage
 Along the carpet's many-coloured stage ;
 Or lisp her merry thoughts with loud endeavour,
 Now here, now there—in noise and mischief ever !

A school-girl next, she curls her hair in papers,
 And mimicks father's gout, and mother's vapours ;
 Discards her doll, bribes Betty for romances,
 Playful at church, and serious when she dances ;
 Tramples alike on customs and on toes,
 And whispers all she hears to all she knows ;
 Terror of caps and wigs and sober notions !
 A romp ! that *longest of perpetual motions* !
 —Till, tamed and tortured into foreign graces,
 She sports her lovely face at publick places ;
 And, with blue laughing eyes, behind her fan,
 First acts her part with that great actor, man.

Too soon a flirt—approach her and she flies ;
 Frowns when pursued, and when entreated sighs ;
 Plays with unhappy men as cats with mice,
 Till fading beauty hints the late advice.

Her prudence dictates what her pride disdained,
And now she sues to slaves herself had chained.

Then comes that good old character, a wife,
With all the dear distracting cares of life ;
A thousand cards a-day at doors to leave,
And, in return, a thousand cards receive ;
Rouge high, play deep, to lead the ton aspire,
With nightly blaze set Portland-place on fire ;
Snatch half a glimpse at concert, opera, ball,
A meteor traced by none, though seen by all ;
And when her shattered nerves forbid to roam,
In very spleen—rehearse the girl at home.

Last th ; grey dowager in ancient flounces,
With snuff and spectacles the age denounces ;
Boasts how the sires of this degenerate isle
Knelt for a look, and duelled for a smile ;
The scourge and ridicule of Goth and Vandal,
Her tea she sweetens, as she sips, with scandal ;
With modern belles eternal warfare wages,
Like her own birds that clamour from their cages ;
And shuffles round to bear her tale to all,
Like some old ruin, “ nodding to its fall.”
Thus woman makes her entrance and her exit,
Then most an actress when she least suspects it.
Yet nature oft peeps out and mars the plot,
Each lesson lost, each poor pretence forgot ;
Full oft with energy that scorns control,
At once lights up the features of the soul ;

Unlocks each thought chained down by coward art,
And to full day the latent passions start.

But she, whose first, best wish is your applause,
Herself exemplifies the truth she draws.
Born on the stage, through every shifting scene,
Obscure or bright, tempestuous or serene,
Still has your smile her trembling spirit fired ;
And can she act with thoughts like these inspired ?
Thus from her mind all artifice she flings,
All skill, all practice, now unmeaning things !
To you, unchecked, each genuine feeling flows,
For, all that life endears—to you she owes,

MONODY ON GARRICK.*SHERIDAN.*

If dying excellence deserves a tear,
 If fond remembrance still is cherished here,
 Can we persist to bid our sorrows flow
 For fabled sufferers and delusive wo ;
 Or with quaint smiles dismiss the plaintive strain,
 Point the quick jest—indulge the comick vein—
 Ere yet to buried Roscius we assign
 One kind regret, one tributary line ?

His fame requires we act a tenderer part :
 His memory claims the tear you gave his art.

The general voice, the meed of mournful verse,
 The splendid sorrows that adorned his hearse,
 The throng that mourned as their dead favourite
 passed,
 The graced respect that claimed him to the last ;
 While Shakspeare's image, from its hallowed base,
 Seemed to prescribe the grave, and point the place :
 Nor these, nor all the sad regrets that flow
 From fond fidelity's domestick wo,
 So much are Garrick's praise—so much his due,
 As on this spot—one tear bestowed by you.

Amid the arts which seek ingenuous fame,
 Our toil attempts the most precarious claim ;
 To him, whose mimic pencil wins the prize,
 Obedient fame immortal wreaths supplies :
 Whate'er of wonder Reynolds now may raise,
 Raphael still boasts contemporary praise :
 Each dazzling light and gaudier bloom subdued,
 With undiminished awe his works are viewed :
 E'en beauty's portrait wears a softer prime,
 Touched by the tender hand of mellowing time.

The patient sculptor owns an humbler part,
 A ruder toil, and more mechanick art ;
 Content with slow and timorous stroke to trace
 The lingering line, and mould the tardy grace :
 But once achieved, though barbarous wreck o'erthrow
 The sacred fane, and lay its glories low,
 Yet shall the sculptured ruin rise to-day,
 Graced by defect, and worshipped in decay ;
 Th' enduring record bears the artist's name,
 Demands his honours, and asserts his fame.

Superior hopes the poet's bosom fire,
 O proud distinction of the sacred lyre !
 Wide as th' inspiring Phœbus darts his ray,
 Diffusive splendour gilds his votary's lay.
 Whether the song heroick woes rehearse
 With epick grandeur and the pomp of verse ;
 Or, fondly gay, with unambitious guile
 Attempt no prize but favouring Beauty's smile ;

Or bear dejected to the lonely grove
 The soft despair of unprevailing love ;
 Whate'er the theme, through every age and clime
 Congenial passions meet the according rhyme,
 The pride of Glory, Pity's sigh sincere,
 Youth's earliest blush, and Beauty's virgin tear.

Such is their meed—their honours thus secure,
 Whose arts yield objects, and whose works endure :
 The actor only shrinks from time's award ;
 Feeble tradition is his memory's guard ;
 By whose faint breath his merits must abide,
 Unvouched by proof, to substance unallied !
 E'en matchless Garrick's art, to heaven resigned,
 No fixed effect, no model, leaves behind.

The grace of action, the adapted mien,
 Faithful as nature to the varied scene ;
 Th' expressive glance, whose subtle comment draws
 Entranced attention, and a mute applause ;
 Gesture that marks, with force and feeling fraught,
 A sense in silence, and a will in thought ;
 Harmonious speech, whose pure and liquid tone
 Gives verse a musick, scarce confessed its own,
 As light from gems assumes a brighter ray,
 And, clothed with orient hues, transcends the day ;
 Passion's wild break, and frowns that awe the sense,
 And every charm of gentle eloquence,
 All perishable !—like th' electrick fire,
 But strike the frame, and, as they strike, expire ;

Incense too pure a bodied flame to bear,
Its fragrance charms the sense, and blends with air.

Where, then, while sunk in cold decay he lies,
And pale eclipse forever veils those eyes,
Where is the blest memorial that ensures
Our Garrick's fame?—whose is the trust?—'tis yours.
And, O! by every charm his art essayed
To soothe your cares! by every grief allayed!
By the hushed wonder which his accents drew!
By his last parting tear, repaid by you!
By all those thoughts, which many a distant night,
Shall mark his memory with a sad delight!
Still in your hearts' dear record bear his name,
Cherish the keen regret that lifts his fame;
To you it is bequeathed, assert the trust,
And to his worth—'tis all you can—be just.

What more is due from sanctifying time,
To cheerful wit, and many a favoured rhyme,
O'er his graced urn shall bloom a deathless wreath,
Whose blossomed sweets shall deck the mask beneath.
For these when sculpture's votive toil shall rear
The due memorial of a loss so dear,
O loveliest mourner, gentle Muse! be thine
The pleasing wo, to guard the laurelled shrine.
As Fancy, oft by Superstition led
To roam the mansions of the sainted dead,
Has viewed by shadowy eve's unfaithful gloom,
A weeping cherub on a martyr's tomb,

So thou, sweet Muse, hang o'er his sculptured bier,
With patient wo, that loves the lingering tear ;
With thoughts that mourn, nor yet desire relief,
With meek regret, and fond enduring grief ;
With looks that speak—He never shall return !
Chilling thy tender bosom, clasp his urn !
And with soft sighs disperse th' irreverent dust,
Which time may strew upon his sacred bust.

PRIZE PROLOGUE,

WRITTEN BY LORD BYRON, AND SPOKEN AT THE OPEN-
ING OF DRURY-LANE THEATRE, OCTOBER, 1812.

In one dread night our city saw, and sighed—
Bowed to the dust, the Drama's tower of pride,
In one short hour,—beheld the blazing fane,
Apollo sink, and Shakspeare cease to reign.

Ye, who beheld (O sight, admired and mourned,
Whose radiance mocked the ruin it adorned !)
Through clouds of fire, the massy fragments riven,
Like Israel's pillar, chase the night from heaven ;
Saw the long column of revolving flames
Shake its red shadow o'er the startled Thames,
While thousands, thronged around the burning dome,
Shrank back appalled, and trembled for their home ;
As glared the volumed blaze, and ghastly shone
The skies, with lightnings awful as their own ;
Till blackening ashes and the lonely wall
Usurped the Muse's realm, and marked her fall ;
Say—shall this new nor less aspiring pile,
Reared, where once rose the mightiest in our isle,
Know the same favour which the former knew,
A shrine for Shakspeare, worthy him and you ?

✱

Yes—it shall be—the magick of that name
 Defies the scythe of time, the torch of flame,
 On the same spot still consecrates the scene,
 And bids the Drama be where she hath been :—
 This fabrick's birth attests the potent spell,
 Indulge our honest pride, and say, How well !
 As soars this fane to emulate the last,
 Oh ! might we draw our omens from the past,
 Some hour, propitious to our prayers, may boast
 Names such as hallow still the dome we lost.
 On Drury first your Siddons' thrilling art
 O'erwhelmed the gentlest, stormed the sternest heart—
 On Drury, Garrick's latest laurels grew,
 Here your last tears retiring Roscius drew,
 Sighed his last thanks, and wept his last adieu.
 But still for living wit the wreathes may bloom
 That only waste their odours o'er the tomb.
 Such Drury claimed and claims,—nor you refuse
 One tribute to revive his slumbering muse,
 With garlands deck your own Menander's head !
 Nor hoard your honours idly for the dead !

Dear are the days which made our annals bright,
 Ere Garrick fled, or Brinsley ceased to write ;
 Heirs to their labours, like all high-born heirs,
 Vain of our ancestry, as they of theirs,
 While thus Remembrance borrows Banqup's glass,
 To claim the sceptred shadows as they pass,
 And we the mirror hold, where imaged shine
 Immortal names, emblazoned on our line :

Pause—ere their feebler offspring you condemn,
 Reflect how hard the task to rival them !

Friends of the stage—to whom both players and plays
 Must sue alike for pardon or for praise,
 Whose judging voice and eye alone direct
 The boundless power to cherish or reject,
 If e'er frivolity has led to fame,
 And made us blush that you forbear to blame,
 If e'er the sinking stage could condescend
 To sooth the sickly taste it dares not mend,
 All past reproach may present scenes refute,
 And censure, wisely loud, be justly mute !
 Oh ! since your fiat stamps the Drama's laws,
 Forbear to mock us with misplaced applause—
 So pride shall doubly nerve the actor's powers,
 And Reason's voice be echoed back by ours !

This greeting o'er,—the ancient rule obeyed,
 The Drama's homage by her herald paid,
 Receive our welcome too,—whose every tone
 Springs from our hearts, and fain would win your own.
 The curtain rises—may our stage unfold
 Scenes not unworthy Drury's days of old !—
 Britons our judges, Nature for our guide,
 Still may we please, long—long may you preside.

FAREWELL ADDRESS,

SPOKEN BY MR. KEMBLE, AT THE EDINBURGH THEATRE.

WRITTEN BY SIR WALTER SCOTT.

As the worn war-horse, at the trumpet's sound,
 Erects his mane, and neighs, and paws the ground,—
 Disdains the ease his generous lord assigns,
 And longs to rush on the embattled lines,
 So I, your plaudits ringing in mine ear,
 Can scarce sustain to think our parting near;
 To think my scenick hour forever past,
 And that those valued plaudits are my last.

But years steal on, and higher duties crave
 Some space between the theatre and grave;
 That, like the Roman in the Capitol,
 I may adjust my mantle ere I fall:
 My life's brief act in publick service flown,
 The last, the closing scene must be my own.

Here, then, adieu! while yet some well-graced parts
 May fix an ancient favourite in your hearts,
 Not quite to be forgotten, even when
 You look on better actors, younger men:

And if your bosoms own this kindly debt
 Of old remembrance, how shall mine forget ?
 Oh, how forget ! how oft I hither came
 In anxious hope ; how oft returned with fame !
 How oft around your circle this weak hand
 Has waved immortal Shakspeare's magick wand,
 Till the full burst of inspiration came,
 And I have felt, and you have fanned the flame !
 By Memory treasured, while her reign endures,
 These hours must live—and all the charms are yours.

O favoured land ! renowned for arts and arms,
 For manly talent, and for female charms,
 Could this full bosom prompt the sinking line,
 What fervent benedictions now were thine !
 But my last part is played, my knell is rung,
 When even your praise falls faltering from my
 tongue ;
 And all that you can hear, or I can tell,
 Is—Friends and Patrons, hail, and fare you well !

